

Hafa Adai!

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75¢

## 9 distressed swimmers rescued

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**  
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REPORTER

**T**he Department of Public Safety rescued a total of nine distressed swimmers in a span of just one day.

According to a DPS statement, nine swimmers from different locations were rescued on Monday, Feb. 25. Seven distressed swimmers were rescued from the Lau Lau beach and two were res-

cued just outside the Saipan World Resort's beach area.

The seven distressed swimmers were a group of tourists that were rescued at around 1:42pm at Lau Lau beach and the other two were a male and female who were paddle-boarding outside the Saipan World Resort beach area and were rescued at Lau Lau beach and two were res-

**See SWIMMERS on Page 4**

## More Yutu federal aid

By **JON PEREZ**  
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REPORTER

The CNMI will be getting additional federal money that will be used for the islands' recovery efforts in the wake of the destruction of Super

Typhoon Yutu.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, who is currently in Washington, D.C., announced yesterday the infusion of more federal dollars to the Commonwealth after being informed about it by the

White House.

Torres is in the nation's capital to attend the National Governor's Association winter meeting and will also begin consultations for the Section 902 Talks; he first met with Federal Emergency Management Agency deputy administrator Peter

**See YUTU on Page 4**

## Illegal dump cleared in Afetna

The Saipan Mayor's Office had to use heavy equipment to clean up an illegal dumpsite in the Afetna area over the weekend.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



By **ERWIN ENCINARES**  
erwin\_encinares@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

The Saipan Mayor's Office staff spent their weekend in Afetna after finding an ob-

### » 500 cubic yards of waste found

scure illegal dumpsite at the back of Hong Yi Hardware that they cleaned up to prevent

possible sanitary issues.

That took the Saipan Mayor's Office 31 loads to the As Gonno staging area and totaled 517 cubic yards of garbage that were disposed of,

according to Saipan Mayor's Office field operations director Joann Aquino

To put that into perspective, a mid-sized car is about 5

**See DUMP on Page 4**



A fire engulfs a workers' barracks behind a former garment factory in San Antonio yesterday  
KIMBERLY BAUTISTA

## Fire destroys San Antonio barracks

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**  
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REPORTER

A fire engulfed a workers' barracks located behind the former UIC garment factory in San Antonio yesterday.

Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services spokesperson Bobbie Taisacan said that there were no reports of injuries and the fire was controlled at around 5:10pm yesterday.

She said the barracks was home to at least 10 workers

and the fire remains under investigation.

Taisacan said the fire completely destroyed the barracks, including all the belongings of the people who live there.

According to individuals at the scene, the fire was seen and reported before 4pm and they were not sure what or who started the fire.

At the scene, *Saipan Tribune* saw that a vehicle had also caught fire.

Fortunately, the people liv-

**See FIRE on Page 4**

## INSIDE



### BUSINESS

A new survey says that American companies are worried that US-Chinese ties will worsen.

**PAGE 13**



### ASIA

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's armored limousine rolls into Vietnam's capital.

**PAGE 15**



### LIFE & STYLE

R. Kelly walked out of a Chicago jail Monday after posting \$100,000 bail.

**PAGE 19**



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## Local

## Political status panel calls for amendment to law that created it

By JON PEREZ

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REPORTER

The Marianas Political Status Commission will be asking the Legislature to amend the law that created the group, Public Law 19-63, in order to get the public's pulse if there is still the desire to continue the CNMI's political union with the United States, as stated in the mutually-negotiated Covenant, which was approved by U.S. Congress in 1976.

The MPSC, chaired by former senator Pete Reyes, met yesterday at the Saipan Mayor's Office conference room to begin their work to determine if the current political status is still in the best interest of the Commonwealth or if it would be better to change that relationship.

A section of the new law, Section 103 (i), requires the panel to submit to the Legislature within 18 months or no later than 21 months a final report on their findings and recommendations on political status options.

"Our operations starts today, because the first meeting that we had was organizational, where we selected the chair,



The Marianas Political Status Commission met yesterday at the Saipan Mayor's Office conference room.

JON PEREZ

vice chair, and the other officers," Reyes said after their almost two-hour-long meeting.

He said the Legislature already knows of their request to have P.L. 19-63 amended. "The Legislature is aware of this [extension request], so it won't be difficult to convince them that they need to amend the law. We need to ask for an extension so that we can actually work within the original plan of the minimum 18 months or 21 months," he said.

The measure was originally

introduced by former representative Felicidad T. Ogomoro as House Bill 19-2 ; it was signed into law by Gov. Ralph DLG Torres in August 2016.

Reyes said some provisions of the law need some clarity. "There are some provisions... that are ambiguous and may not jive with what we're thinking. The timing, we need to amend that, to make sure the commission works without any legal problem."

"We're drafting a letter to both presiding officers of the

Legislature—House Speaker Blas Jonathan T. Attao (R-Saipan) and Senate President Victor B. Hocog (R-Rota)—we're going to ask them to amend the law and we're going to justify it by explaining the chronology of events that have taken place."

Reyes said that certain factors—like Super Typhoon Yutu and the election being postponed for one week—caused the delay in having

themselves organized and begin operations. "We want to have that timing, barring any possibility of a future typhoon that...may have to delay this further."

The commission already talked about how to move forward with their education and information campaign; Reyes recommended to the group that they hold public hearings in each of the CNMI's seven precincts in-

stead of an earlier suggestion of going to every village.

"Instead of going to every village, we will have one for each precinct to save money. To expand the education process for the political status, we're going to use the media—newspaper, radio, and television—to educate people on what [MPSC] is doing. Also, to tap into the different resources that are available in the government, which is authorized by the statute."

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## IGIA MEETING

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres joined the other territory governors, members of Congress, and officials at the White House for the 2019 Senior Plenary Session of the Interagency Group on Insular Areas on Monday, Feb. 25, in Washington, D.C. Torres is shown with Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, Guam Delegate Michael San Nicolas, American Samoa Delegate Aumua Amata Radewagen, and other federal and territorial officials.



## GOVERNORS' MEETING

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres joined the governors of the Western Governors Association for a breakfast meeting with acting administrator of the Environmental Protection Administration Andrew Wheeler, Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta, and acting Interior secretary David Bernhardt. The breakfast meeting centered on discussions of challenges faced by each state and territory. This included fire prevention programs, water quality, contamination on dairy production, invasive species, clean energy initiatives, economy, agriculture, nursing home crisis, and state control water ways, among other issues. The CNMI and Guam focused on the need for H-2 workers for construction projects for military buildup and the rebuilding of about 4,000 homes destroyed by Super Typhoon Yutu.



## WGA focus on states' challenges

By JON PEREZ  
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REPORTER

Members of the Western Governors Association held a breakfast meeting last Sunday and discussion was centered on the challenges faced by each of the 20 states and two territories—the CNMI and Guam.

Included in the discussion were fire prevention programs, water quality, contamination of dairy products, invasive species, clean energy initiatives, economy, agriculture, nursing home crisis, and state control waterways.

California, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington state experienced separate wildfires in 2018, with the damage amounting to billions of dollars.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres joined the other members of the WGA in the breakfast meeting with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency acting administrator Andrew Wheeler. U.S. Department of Labor Secretary Alexander Acosta, and acting Interior secretary David Bernhardt.

On Monday, Feb. 25, Torres and the other governors of the U.S. territories met with members of U.S. Congress and White House officials for the 2019 Senior Plenary Session of the Interagency Group on Insular Areas.

Torres and Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero focused on each of their need to hire H-2B workers for ongoing and planned construction projects, with the CNMI needing to rebuild hundreds of homes destroyed by Super Typhoon Yutu last October while their southern island neighbor has a demand to fill the need for its military buildup.

Torres and Leon Guerrero are trying a unified stand in the hopes that the ban imposed by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to bring in citizens of the Philippines via the H-2B work visa category would be lifted.

He is also set to attend several committee hearings in both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate in connection with the CNMI's labor and immigration issues.

On Tuesday, Feb. 26, Torres and the other governors of the territories, at the invita-

tion of Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), will testify before the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Commit-

tee hearing.

On Feb. 27, Torres is scheduled to testify before the U.S. House Natural Re-

sources Committee at the invitation of Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) in connection with the hear-

ing on the CNMI delegate's H.R. 560—the Northern Mariana Islands Residents Relief Act—and the impact

of the ban H-2B worker visa ban on Philippine workers. He would end the day with a meeting with DoD officials.



Torres

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# Drug court graduate arrested for alleged 'ice' trafficking

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**  
Kimberly\_bautista@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

A former graduate of the Superior Court's Drug Court program has been arrested anew for allegedly pushing methamphetamine hydrochloride or "ice."

According to court information, Skyler James Benavente, 32, was arrested following a "buy-walk" operation conducted by the Drug Enforcement Task Force on Jan. 31, 2019.

Benavente was ordered to post 10 percent of his initial

\$10,000 bail for his release.

Benavente was scheduled for a preliminary hearing on March 4 at 1:30pm; he will be arraigned on March 11 at 9am.

Court information states that a cooperating source informed task force officers on Jan. 29 that Benavente was distributing ice to Saipan customers.

On Jan. 31, task force officers met with the cooperating source again for a sting operation to buy ice from Benavente.

At about 4:11pm, DETF of-

ficers recorded a phone conversation between the cooperating source and Benavente, during which Benavente told the cooperating source that he could provide him/her with ice but it would take about an hour and they would meet at Benavente's residence.

Shortly after the phone conversation, Benavente texted the cooperating source that he had \$50 worth of ice. DETF officers then equipped the cooperating source with a wire and \$50 and they made their way to Benavente's residence.

At 4:25pm, DETF officers set up surveillance around Benavente's residence in As Lito and waited for the cooperating source to pull in for the transaction. Benavente then entered the cooperating source's car upon arrival and made the transaction.

At 4:40pm, the cooperating source left Benavente's house, met with DETF officers, and showed them what he allegedly got from Benavente—a small ziplock bag containing a crystalline substance that later tested positive for methamphetamine.

## Number of Kagman shelterees shot up

By **ERWIN ENCINARES**  
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REPORTER

The number of evacuees at the Kagman Emergency Shelter Facility abruptly tripled last weekend, with fears of Typhoon Wutip hitting the Marianas. All of them have already gone home, though.

Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Secretary Robert Hunter told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview yesterday that they saw an additional 100 residents at the facility.

"We've had an increase of

about 100 shelterees in the KESF," Hunter said. "...But they are now all gone."

Hunter noted that most of the shelterees that stayed at the KESF over the weekend feared that Typhoon Wutip, which had sustained wind speeds of 155 mph, could possibly affect the Marianas.

The U.S. National Weather Service Guam upgraded Wutip to a super typhoon early Sunday morning, but then downgraded it to just a typhoon last Monday.

As of 2:30pm yesterday, the USNWS in Guam noted that Wutip was about 345 miles west-northwest of Guam and about 390 miles west of Saipan. Wutip had maximum sustained winds of up to 140 mph and is forecasted to weaken over the next few days as it makes its way into the Philippines, with a northward trajectory of 3 mph.

"The shelterees came in to make sure that Wutip was not worse than it seems and had their tents put up immediate-

ly after the typhoon passed," said Hunter. "It just goes to show how useful having a shelter on the ready is—it was a good exercise for us."

According to Hunter, the KESF still has 53 shelterees since Super Typhoon Yutu.

"A lot of the ones that came [to] KESF had been at the shelter before. They were in tents, so their tents were taken down, they were placed in the shelter, and their tents were reassembled right after Wutip was out of our area," Hunter said.

## SWIMMERS

From Page 1

around 4:51pm.

DPS officers learned that the group of tourists was swimming at East Bay in the morning when the current got stronger. One swimmer attempted to climb up a make-shift ladder at East Bay but it broke. The strong current made it difficult for the swimmers to climb the rocks and it also made swimming toward

the nearest shore impossible because the current kept pulling the swimmers back out. One swimmer managed to swim to shore and call 911.

At 1:42pm the DPS *Impact* boat arrived outside the reef of Lau Lau and approached the seven distressed swimmers, who were all holding on to a yellow flotation device.

The DPS rescue boat transported all the stranded swimmers back to the Smiling Cove Marina, where medics were on standby to conduct

a medical safety check on all the swimmers.

The second rescue happened when DPS dispatch received a call about two stranded swimmers in one of the World War II tanks just outside of the Saipan World Resort beach. Rescue jetskis 1 and 2 arrived at around 4:28pm and proceeded toward the two stranded swimmers atop the furthest tank outside World Resort.

CNMI DPS Boating Safety Officers noticed that both

stranded swimmers had paddleboards that were still attached to their ankles.

The female swimmer told police that she was unable to paddle back to shore. By 4:51pm, both swimmers were safely back on the beach.

DPS is urging the community to wear life jackets when venturing out into the water, stay informed about weather and current conditions, and limit alcohol intake and excessive sun exposure to avoid heat strokes.

## DUMP

From Page 1

cubic yards.

"It's a very sad state. It is so sad to see people living in that kind of condition," Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview yesterday. "People who are [actively involved in illegal dumping] don't deserve to live on this island."

Apatang noted that it is a shame for young volunteers who are also students to be involved in picking up trash when some adults just illegally dump their waste right outside their homes.

"It's just so sad that they are not cooperating with beautifying our island," he said. "I would like to encourage our people to please work together and beautify our islands for our visitors,"

he said, noting that the living conditions in the area was "so bad" that he believes the Department of Public Health should visit the area.

Aquino noted that a mayor's office staff discovered the illegal dumpsite only last Friday.

"...The area was probably overlooked because of the area," she said.

According to Aquino, the area is not immediately ac-

cessible unless you are deliberately heading into the area.

"We stumbled upon the [dumpsite]...when our guys swept the area," she added.

According to Aquino, her staff had already blocked the road toward the back of Hong Yi Hardware to prevent further illegal dumping. She reiterated that the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality strictly enforces the 1989 anti-littering act.

engulfed in flames.

The blaze was reportedly traveling south toward the UIC warehouse but firefighters suppressed the blaze and prevented it from moving toward other warehouses in the UIC compound.

The homes of at least four people were destroyed in that fire.

## YUTU

From Page 1

T. Gaynor last week.

He is also scheduled to meet with other federal officials to discuss the CNMI's immigration and labor problems, and will be testifying in separate committee hearings in the U.S. Congress—House and Senate.

"Lt. Gov. [Arnold I.] Palacios and I have just been informed that President [Donald J.] Trump has approved our request for additional disaster assistance funding for relief and recovery assistance for the CNMI as a result of the impacts of Super Typhoon Yutu," said Torres.

"[Trump on Monday] ordered that all federal funds for all categories of public assistance, hazard mitigation, and the other needs assistance are authorized at 90 percent of total eligible costs and federal funds for debris removal and emergency protective measures are authorized at 100 percent for 180 days from the start of the incident."

Super Typhoon Yutu devastated the islands of Saipan (southern part) and Tinian, more than a month after Typhoon Mangkhut hit the southernmost island of Rota. Saipan is still recovering from the devastation of Typhoon Soudelor that hit almost four years ago.

Acting governor Arnold I. Palacios said the increased federal funds would help stabilize the CNMI's finances after the economy took a hit in the last quarter of 2018. "This means more federal assistance for disaster relief, increased technical assistance, additional infrastructure resiliency, and additional financial help for qualified residents."

"Over the course of the last few months, we have made great progress in strengthening our utilities and critical infrastructure, while also providing relief goods to residents. Our next steps include our permanent housing mission, which will build new and stronger homes for qualified residents, and reenergizing our economy with our private sector and tourism partners," added Palacios.

Virginia Villagomez, Torres' authorized representative, said the quick recovery of the islands is in part due to the partnership between the CNMI

and other federal agencies like FEMA. "Also, for the approval of our request for additional federal assistance."

"Under Gov. Torres and Lt. Gov. Palacios, we are on the right track at not only building new homes and stronger infrastructure, but we are also on our way toward stabilizing our government finances."

The White House, in a statement, said Trump signed an amended disaster declaration for the CNMI so additional assistance could be made available to the Commonwealth. The amended declaration authorized an increase in federal aid for relief and recovery efforts.

"Under the president's major disaster declaration issued for the CNMI on Oct. 26, 2018, federal funding was made available for public assistance, hazard mitigation, and other needs assistance at 75 percent federal funding of total eligible costs," the White House said.

"For a period of 30 days, assistance for emergency protective measures, including direct federal assistance, was authorized at 100 percent of the total eligible costs."

Press secretary Kevin Bautista said all federal aid—public assistance, hazard mitigation, and other needs assistance—will have a 90-10 cost share.

The White House statement added: "All are authorized at 90 percent of total eligible costs and federal funds for debris removal and emergency protective measures are authorized at 100 percent for 180 days from the start of the incident."

The Torres administration welcomed the White House's decision. "I want to thank our President, the White House, the [Federal Emergency Management Agency], our federal partners, the CNMI Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, and our first responders at the Joint Field Office who helped us with this request as we continue to manage this recovery."

"Our islands took a major hit economically and financially, so this additional federal assistance will go a long way in building a more resilient community and a stronger foundation as we rebuild our economy and infrastructure," added Torres.

## FIRE

From Page 1

ing in the area were able to evacuate before the flames got worse.

Taisacan said the cause of the fire is still under investigation and further information will follow.

The semi-concrete barracks is located right behind the former UIC garment factory and the old Sablan Construction Warehouse that was also completely destroyed in a fire last year.

According to a previous *Saipan Tribune* article, the old Sablan Construction Warehouse was one of three

structures that were engulfed in flames and left completely destroyed in June 2018.

The fire spread to an adjacent warehouse, an abandoned United International Corp. building that also sustained total damage.

When firefighters arrived at the scene, the abandoned Sablan warehouse was already



# Ataligs' motion for continuance of trial approved

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
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REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona granted yesterday a motion by Rota Mayor Efraim M. Atalig and his girlfriend,

## Subpoena on OAG quashed; deemed a 'fishing expedition'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
ferdie\_delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho granted yesterday the Office of the Attorney General's motion to quash the subpoena served on former prosecutor Teri C. Tenorio and other OAG staff by a defendant in a sexual assault of a minor case.

Ruling that Joseph Seman Epina's subpoenas do not satisfy the specificity requirement, Camacho said such subpoenas "constitute an improper fishing expedition."

The judge said the request is not sufficiently specific "if the moving party cannot reasonably specify the information contained or believed to be contained in the documents sought but merely hopes that something useful will turn up."

Camacho said an open-ended request for documents that includes phrases such as "any and all documents" or "includes, without limitation" will be quashed as an improper fishing expedition.

In Epina's case, Camacho said, the language the defendant uses in subpoenas, "all documents," "all communications," "all recordings," "all reports," and "all notes" is similar to the language used in other subpoenas that have been quashed for not being specific.

The judge said the request for "all documents" resemble a civil discovery request.

Camacho said these "requests do not identify specific documents or sufficiently narrow categories of specific documents as required to survive a motion to quash."

Instead, the judge said, Epina's subpoenas improperly cast their net wide in the hope

## Guam declared clear of danger from powerful Pacific typhoon

**HAGATNA, Guam (AP)** — Authorities have declared Guam clear of the danger of a powerful typhoon in the Pacific Ocean.

Acting governor Joshua Tenorio says the U.S. territory will in the coming days assess the damage caused by winds from Typhoon Wutip.

People didn't wait for the government's announcement to leave their homes on Sun-

day. Restaurants in the towns of Tamuning and Tumon were packed with people, Catholic Masses went on, and the shopping centers were full of early morning shoppers.

Wutip moved northwest, away from Guam. The weather service said the storm could intensify to a category 5 typhoon before it begins to weaken late Sunday.

Manglona granted the Ataligs' joint motion to put off the jury trial to a later date due to the continuity of counsel, ongoing exchange of dis-

covery materials, and to give them more time to prepare for the case "taking into account the exercise of due diligence."

The new trial date is June 4, 2019, at 10am, instead of March 12 that was initially set. Manglona set the hearing on Mayor Efraim Atalig's motion to exclude evidence relating to three trips for March 15 at 9am.

Camacho, however, ruled that Epina should still receive the evidence he is entitled to under the due process clause of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. He said that due process requires that the Commonwealth disclose any exculpatory and impeachment evidence that is favorable to the defendant and material to his guilt or punishment, regardless of whether the defendant asks for the information.

Camacho said Epina is entitled to any evidence favorable to him or that materially affects the credibility of the witnesses, or the admissibility of evidence. That material should also include material that impeaches the character or testimony of the prosecution witness in a criminal trial.

The 45-year-old Epina is facing charges of raping a then-12-year-old girl on March 12, 2016. Espina, through assistant public defender Heather M. Zona, subpoenaed five OAG employees—then-assistant attorney general Teri C. Tenorio, Dixie Inos-Camacho, Lawrence Pangelinan, Urbano Babauta, and Gerrilyn Dela Cruz.

The subpoenas seek evidence that the government tainted the alleged victim's memory.

The OAG moved to quash the subpoenas as they are not specific, not necessary for the defendant's trial, and exempted from disclosure.

Epina, through Zona, opposed the motions.

Camacho heard the motions last Feb. 15. Zona argued as counsel for Epina. Assistant attorney general Robert "Charlie" Lee represented the government.

Sen. Justo S. Quitugua (R-Saipan) suggests that all bus shelters in the CNMI should have one design that is typhoon-resilient, especially with the Commonwealth being frequented by storms.

Several of these structures were destroyed when two storms struck the islands last year. Quitugua said there's always an issue about bus shelters, especially when it comes to who is responsible for maintaining them.

"Is [Department of Public Lands] the authority to designate a portion of the land or is it [the Department of Public Works]?" he asked. "The Public School System designates the bus stops and the route. But, when it comes to building the bus shelters, sometimes the private sector comes in. DPW should come out with a uniform design—a design that would be safe and would keep students safe."

## Uniform design pushed for bus shelters

By **JON PEREZ**  
jon\_perez@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

Sen. Justo S. Quitugua (R-Saipan) suggests that all bus shelters in the CNMI should have one design that is typhoon-resilient, especially with the Commonwealth being frequented by storms.

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Quitugua, along with Sens. Sixto K. Igisomar (R-Saipan)

The judge granted Mayor Efraim Atalig's request to appear by telephone for the motion hearing. She said Evelyn Atalig may also appear by telephone if she wishes to participate in that hearing.

The Ataligs appeared telephonically at yesterday's hearing on the joint motion for continuance. Mayor Efraim Atalig's court-appointed counsel, David

Banes, and co-counsel, Cong Nie, were present in court. Evelyn Atalig's court-appointed counsel, Steven Pixley, was also in court. Assistant U.S. attorney Eric O'Malley appeared for the U.S. government.

According to the minutes of the hearing, Banes informed the court regarding issues with trying to find an investigator and explained other reasons

for their request for the continuance of the trial date.

Pixley informed the court that they were still looking for an investigator. He stated that his client agreed to the request for more time.

The Ataligs are indicted on five corruption charges for allegedly arranging CNMI government-funded trips to California, Palau, Guam, and Saipan under fraudulent pretenses.

The defendants have pleaded not guilty to all the charges.

tant since we will be saving money for repairs and other stuff. So, we can move with that same blueprint and we can work it to the other precincts," said Quitugua.

Sablan, who is the PUTC chairman, said some bus stops are too small. "Sometimes, the kids in different villages can be found around the bus shelter. When it is raining, it gets crowded, with everyone already inside."

"These are some of the concerns. A uniform design will be beneficial to all the kids that are using the bus shelters," he added.

Igisomar said that some of the light materials used in building bus shelters are potential hazards. "Maybe there is also the potential hazard for these bus shelters. Those poles are potentially hazardous and we must be sure that these poles are not being sat on."



JON PEREZ

A bus shelter in Garapan can only provide shelter to a handful of children and doesn't give enough shade in case of heavy rain.

and Vinnie F. Sablan (Ind-Saipan), suggested in last week's Senate Public Utilities, Transportation, and Communications Committee meeting that the bus stops should be strong enough to withstand typhoons.

Quitugua cited two bus shelters in the north—one in Tanapag, and one in As Teo. "Many typhoons came and they are still standing."

He pointed out that DPW already has a blueprint for bus shelters. "The design is impor-

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# Typhoon debris removal now up to households

As of last Sunday, Feb. 24, 2018, the Super Typhoon

Yutu debris removal operation from the village areas on

Saipan was completed.

The Department of Public

Works and the Mayor's Office of Saipan are no longer



## ETC CONTRIBUTION

Saipan Stevedore Co. recently made an education tax credit contribution to Mount Carmel School. General manager Michael Demapan, center, and assistant general manager Lee Cabrera, left, stopped by the school recently to present the contribution to school president Galvin Deleon Guerrero. Deleon Guerrero said the donation will go toward the school's continuing recovery efforts from Super Typhoon Yutu.

## 'Impossible to get fair trial as detective threw out notes'

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**  
ferdie\_delatorre@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

A defendant in a sexual assault case argues that it is now impossible for him to obtain a fair trial after a police detective threw away the notes that are necessary for him to build his case.

Joseph Seman Epina, through assistant public defender Heather M. Zona, asked the Superior Court to dismiss the charges of sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace.

In the alternative, Zona said, the court should sanctions the CNMI government.

Zona said the court should dismiss the case on the

grounds that the prosecution violated its obligation by failing to provide police notes prior to the memory taint hearing in this case.

She said the prosecution will not be able to provide those notes ever, even for trial.

Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho conducted a memory taint hearing over many days in August 2018 to determine the reliability of the girl's memory.

Zona said the Department of Public Safety had evidence that was relevant and material to Epina's case—notes taken by a then-detective about the investigation, including interviews of Epina's accuser.

She said those notes were

at least used by the detective's police report.

Zona said the defense requested the notes in March 2016 but they never were provided.

Zona said evidence is now unavailable to the defense because the detective threw out her notes in November 2017 without producing them to the defense.

She noted that the detective testified that she threw away her notes from this case because she became an evidence custodian.

The defense counsel said defendant cannot have a fair trial without the exculpatory evidence, and he cannot adequately cross-examine the detective or his accuser.

Zona pointed out that the detective's notes in this case are material to the manner in which she (detective) conducted the investigation, and whether there ever was a viable case at all.

Zona said the prosecution violated Epina's due process rights by failing to disclose all evidence that might be favorable to him.

The lost evidence, she said, was material to Epina's defense and failure to preserve the evidence constitutes bad faith. Even without that, Zona said, it also violates Epina's due process.

The 45-year-old Epina is facing charges for raping a then-12-year-old girl on March 12, 2016.

picking up typhoon-related debris around the villages. That means residents should no longer bring their waste to the roadside.

Residents are being advised that they will need to bring their waste themselves to the transfer station or the Marpi landfill for proper disposal.

For disposal of white goods (like appliances and air conditioners, etc.), electronic waste, and household hazardous waste, residents may still bring them to the As Gonno site for proper disposal.

With the debris removal operation now completed, the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality is warning the public that any disposal of debris along the roadside will be considered illegal dumping and the responsible person(s) and/or entity will be charged with the violation accordingly. The illegal dumping violation may result in penalty with fine as prescribed in the BECQ regulations.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, contact Enrique Dela Cruz, director, Solid Waste Management Division, at telephone numbers 322-2745/2760. (PR)

## US House panel sets hearing on Kilili' resident status bill

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—The full Natural Resources Committee will hold a Feb. 27 legislative hearing (Feb. 28 on Saipan) to discuss H.R. 560, a bill by Rep. Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-CNMI) to clarify legal status for certain CNMI residents.

The hearing will take place starting at 10am, Washington, D.C. time).

Witnesses at the hearing will speak to the need to provide continued legal resident status for a group of people born in the Northern Mariana Islands after the local government voted to become a U.S. territory but before the CNMI was legally accepted as a commonwealth.

Former U.S. President Barack Obama had been offering those people—all of whom are officially designated as stateless persons—humani-

tarian parole to remain in the CNMI, which did not extend to a free right of travel to the U.S. mainland. President Trump revoked that parole in December 2018, which left parolees in legal limbo and threatens to force approximately 1,500 people to leave the Commonwealth by June 2019.

As with all hearings, the event is open to media and the public.

The witness list includes Gov. Ralph DLG Torres; Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero; Michael S. Sablan, vice president at private company Triple J Enterprises and a former public auditor of the CNMI; Nikolao Pula, director, Office of Insular Affairs, U.S. Department of the Interior; and Dr. David B. Gootnick, director, International Affairs and Trade, U.S. Government Accountability Office. (PR)

**Board of Trustees**  
**Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation**  
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands  
1 Lower Navy Hill Road Navy Hill, Saipan, MP 96950

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9911, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation hereby gives notice that a Special meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on Thursday, February 28, 2019 at 5:00pm in the CEO's Conference Room 3 located at the Administrative Offices.

CHCC Board of Trustees Special Meeting  
February 28, 2019 at 5:00 pm

**Agenda**

- I. Call to Order
- II. Determination of Quorum
- III. Approval of Agenda
- IV. Adoption of Minutes
- V. Public Comments
- VI. To vote and approve Applications for Privileges:  
New Applicants:  
1) Dr. Thomas Austin  
2) Dr. William Chotas  
3) Dr. Justin Jones 4) Dr. Akshai Subramanian  
5) Dr. Kapil Saxena 6) Dr. Ashebir Chekol
- VII. To vote and approve for a Corporate Credit Card
- VIII. Review and approve CHCC FY 2020 Budget.
- IX. CEO Evaluation
- X. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in Executive Session to consult with legal counsel.
- XI. Adjournment

**Commonwealth Utilities Corporation**  
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**PUBLIC NOTICE**

Pursuant to the Open Government Act (1 CMC §9901 *et seq.*), the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation ("CUC") Board of Directors hereby informs the general public that the Board will hold a **Special Board meeting** on **Friday, March 1, 2019 at 10:00 a.m.** The meeting will be held at the CUC Conference Room, Room 17, 3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building to consider the following agenda. Public attendance is welcome.

**AGENDA\***

- I. Preliminary Matters
  - A. Call to Order
  - B. Roll Call
  - C. Reading of the Notice of the Agenda
  - D. Adoption of Agenda
- II. Public Comments\*\*
- III. Executive Session
  - A. Discussions of Specific Personnel Contracts and Performance Evaluations
- IV. Announcements
- V. Adjournment

\* Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Agenda maybe modified during the meeting.  
\*\* Public comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to three minutes. Everyone is welcome to submit written comments.  
\*\*\* Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Board of Directors may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY**  
**CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**RFP NO.: RFP19-BECQ/DCRM-056**

**SUBMISSION DATE: MARCH 20, 2019 TIME: 09:00 A.M.**

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COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

**ALL** QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP **MUST** BE SUBMITTED VIA-EMAIL TO **MS. JANICE CASTRO** BY EMAIL AT [jcastro@dcrm.gov.mp](mailto:jcastro@dcrm.gov.mp). **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS MARCH 08, 2019.** RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PERSPECTIVE PROPOSERS.

**THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.**

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

**/S/ ELI D. CABRERA**  
**ADMINISTRATOR, BECQ**

**/S/ JOSEPH A. TUDELA**  
**ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S**



# 'Time to break silence on suicide'

By JON PEREZ  
jon\_perez@saipantribune.com  
REPORTER

The CNMI State Public School System is hoping to bring suicide and other related subjects to the forefront by promoting awareness of the issue in the community.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration and the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention report that suicide has become the second-leading cause of death for children ages 10 to 14 years old and that young children are increasingly at risk for it.

Suicide and other self-injurious behavior are considered taboo issues in a tightly-knit community like the CNMI, which has been rocked by suicide-related deaths in the past year, with most of the victims being students.

Other attempted suicides and self-injurious behavior from elementary to middle and high school students are seldom reported, with the victims most of the time experiencing anxiety and depression.

Dr. Yvonne Pangelinan, the PSS associate commissioner for Student and Support Services, spoke with members of the Legislature

last week and gave a presentation titled, "Reaching Our Wounded Youth."

CNMI PSS School Attendance Review Committee coordinator Robert L. Coldeen III and CNMI Youth Suicide Prevention Program of the Community Guidance Center project director Ana Ada joined Pangelinan at the presentation.

Changing the conversation in the community, Pangelinan said, would focus more on protective factors and other things that can be done to prevent suicide and attempts at other self-injurious behavior.

"Awareness must evolve from highlighting suicide in our community to bringing to light the things we can do to help raise strong, resilient kids who are able to cope with stress, anxiety, depression and mental health issues," Pangelinan told *Saipan Tribune*. "The analogy I used was moving upstream to where the precipitating factors that lead to depression, anxiety, 'falling into the ocean' are."

She added that the community must unite in helping make life experiences better for children. "Help them understand that they can be resili-

ent in the face of challenges, give them real-life examples of adults who have overcome, build their self-efficacy early in life. Perhaps we can

avoid the devastating effects of suicide risk, ideation, and completion."

Suicide and other issues related to it are a touchy sub-

ject in the community and Pangelinan said she is aware of that, with individuals or members of the family wanting to remain silent and keep

things private.

"Our goal is not to expose anyone's vulnerability or struggle, but to break the stigma of depression and anxiety so that our kids will reach out for help when they need to and avoid keeping their feelings hidden," she said.

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## CLIMATE CHANGE, NCDS, EMERGENCIES

## New WHO regional chief highlights his priorities

SUVA, Fiji—The new World Health Organization regional director for the Western Pacific, Dr. Takeshi Kasai, met this week with leaders, partners, and communities in the Pacific to discuss critical health challenges and solutions.

“Every Pacific island is different and each has specific health challenges that require tailored approaches,” said Kasai. “At the same time, what I’ve seen and heard throughout the past year—including during visits to hospitals, clinics, schools and communities in Fiji and Kiribati this week—is that to better support the people of the Pacific, we must do more to address the impact on health of climate change, tackle the high burden of noncommunicable diseases like diabetes and high blood pressure, and improve preparedness for disasters and outbreaks.”

“Member states across the Pacific want WHO to focus more on these critical areas with new and innovative ways to address the needs of their people,” he said. “I’m committed to working with governments and partners to do exactly that.”

Dr. Corinne Capuano, director of Pacific Technical Sup-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dr. Takeshi Kasai, World Health Organization regional director for the Western Pacific, visit the Korolevu Health Center on Fiji's Coral Coast with Fiji Health Minister Dr. Ifereimi Waqainabete.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dr. Takeshi Kasai, World Health Organization regional director for the Western Pacific, visit the Tungaru Central Hospital on Tarawa, Kiribati.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dr. Takeshi Kasai, World Health Organization regional director for the Western Pacific, visit Fiji's Emergency Medical Assistance Team warehouse, with equipment on standby for deployment.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

World Health Organization regional director for the Western Pacific, Dr. Takeshi Kasai, visits the Taburao Health Clinic on Kiribati's Abaiang Island.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Dr. Takeshi Kasai, World Health Organization regional director for the Western Pacific, visit coconut groves killed by salt water intrusion on Kiribati's Abaiang Island, near relocated Tabunginkao Village

families and societies—is a moral and economic imperative, he said.

“Risk factors such as tobacco, harmful use of alcohol, unhealthy diets and physical inactivity are putting a great deal of pressure on health systems across the Pacific,” said Kasai. “We must do better.”

Combating NCDs requires strong primary health care systems that “look at the whole person, the foods they eat and the lifestyle they lead.”

### Emergencies and outbreaks

Disease outbreaks, natural disasters and climate change increasingly affect the Pacific. In 2018 alone, there were more than 20 infectious disease events and 12 public health disasters in the Pacific. In addition to the loss of lives, these events often cause widespread economic and social disruption.

“These hazards threaten national and regional health security. They impact directly the health and safety of communities, and seriously disrupt health services, as responding can be both logistically and financially draining,” said Kasai.

The WHO Health Emergencies Programme team in Fiji works closely with governments and regional partners to develop practical solutions and strengthen capacities to detect, assess and respond to emergencies.

“When disaster strikes, we’re ready to deploy our team of trained emergency response professionals, as well as medical supplies and other resources, to help governments and communities in need,” he said.

### Meeting and greeting

In Fiji, Kasai met with the Attorney-General Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Minister of Health and Medical Services Ifereimi Waqainabete, and other senior leaders. He spoke to students and faculty at Fiji National University, and visited health care facilities as well as a health promoting school.

In Kiribati, Kasai met with Minister of Health and Medical Services Tauanei Marea and other national and community leaders. He visited primary health care facilities and villages in South Tarawa and on Abaiang Island to see first-hand the effects of climate change.

“It has been an honor to meet and speak with so many people across the Pacific,” Kasai said. “From top political leaders to health professionals, students and citizens, we all have one thing in common: we know that we must work together today to address the health challenges of tomorrow.” (PR)

port and WHO representative to the South Pacific, stressed the significance of Kasai’s extended visit: “Having Dr. Kasai here in Fiji and Kiribati so soon after taking up leadership of WHO in the region highlights just how important the Pacific is and how pressing challenges like climate change are.”

“Under his leadership, our dedicated teams in Suva, Honiara, Port Vila, Apia, Tarawa, Pohnpei and Nuku’alofa will continue working closely with governments and partners to address each islands’ unique challenges,” she said.

### Climate change and health

Throughout the weeklong visit, Kasai witnessed the ravages of climate change, including entire villages destroyed by rising seas in Kiribati. “While climate change creates health risks

for everyone on the planet, for many in the Pacific it threatens their very existence,” he said.

“Now more than ever we need to help decision-makers understand the need for immediate action to create strong, climate-resilient health systems,” he said.

Extreme weather events and environmental changes affect air quality, safe drinking-water, food security and housing. They increase rates of heat stress, malnutrition, diarrhea and vector-borne diseases, and strain health systems.

### Noncommunicable diseases

Noncommunicable diseases, including heart disease, stroke and diabetes, are the leading cause of premature deaths in the Pacific. Stepping up efforts to address these challenges—and the burden they place on



## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

Office of the Executive Director



### INVITATION FOR BIDS

CUC-IFB-19-006

#### KAGMAN WATERLINE AND BOOSTER STATION REHABILITATION

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Kagman Waterline and Booster Station Rehabilitation on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists, on the installation of a new booster station to replace the existing Kumoi pump station. The work also includes and connection of a new 8-inch PVC transmission line and a new 6-inch PVC distribution line complete with all necessary valves, fittings, and appurtenances. It will also involve the rehabilitation of the existing deep well KG-131 and the reconnection of all customers onto new or existing waterlines within the project area. The Contractor shall complete the work in accordance with the plans, specifications and terms of the contract.

This project is funded by a grant from the United States of Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.

CUC requires the Project to be completed in **300 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **February 28, 2019 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Conference Room No.15, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

**One (1) original and Five (5) hard copies** along with an electronic copy of the proposal on a compact disk or USB Drive in PDF format must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked “CUC-IFB-19-006- Kagman Waterline and Booster Station Rehabilitation”, to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 21, 2019**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud.

Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

Bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor’s preparation of a bid under the contract.

A **Bid Guarantee** of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier’s check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States, Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A **Payment Bond** of one hundred (100%) percent and a **Performance Bond** of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers’ questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI’s Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI’s Insurance Code.

Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 7, 2019** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, at email manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to LCDR Travis Spaeth, CUC Water/Wastewater Senior Engineer at email travis.spaeth@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Administrative Support Assistant at email christie.sablan@cucgov.org

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO  
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN  
Purchasing Administrator



# Register for NMC spring semester at info session

Northern Marianas College is inviting individuals who are interested in furthering their education or advancing their professional careers to attend its information session scheduled for tomorrow, Thursday, Feb. 28, 2019.

The information session is open to all prospective students and community members. The

session, which will be held from 5:30pm to 6:30pm in the NMC Olympio T. Borja Library at the college's As Terlaje campus, will also allow participants to register for classes immediately after the event.

The topics that will be discussed include the college's degree programs, Prior Learning Assessment pro-

gram, financial aid, and other initiatives.

Participants will also qualify to have their application fee and their placement test fees waived for NMC's upcoming spring 2019 semester, a savings of about \$75.

NMC faculty, staff, and students from the different degree programs at NMC,

as well as Student Services representatives from counseling, financial aid, and admissions, will be on hand to answer questions.

NMC offers several degree and certificate programs, including a bachelor of science degree in education (emphasis in elementary education, early childhood education, special

education, or rehabilitation and human services), bachelor of science degree in business management (emphasis in accounting); associate of arts degree in business, associate of applied science degrees in business administration (emphasis in accounting, business management, or computer applications), associate of arts in liberal arts (emphasis in education, health and physical

education, and social work), associate of science in nursing, natural resources management, associate of applied science in criminal justice, and hospitality management.

For more information about the information session and/or applying to NMC, contact the Office of Admissions & Records at (670) 237-6770, email [oar@marianas.edu](mailto:oar@marianas.edu) or visit [www.marianas.edu](http://www.marianas.edu). **(PR)**



## COMMUNITY BRIEFS

### MLSC probate workshop on Tinian

The Marianas Office of Micronesian Legal Services Corp. will be hosting a series of probate workshops. These are intended as community legal education to help people in the CNMI understand the probate process. The workshop on Tinian will be held tomorrow, Thursday, Feb. 28, 2019, at 10am at the Tinian Public Library and will focus on where to start for probate when a loved-one dies. The workshops are free. Call MLSC at 234-7729 for more information. **(PR)**

### MITT-SEIS meetings postponed

Due to the effects of Typhoon Wutip, Joint Region Marianas and Navy officials have postponed the public meetings to discuss the Mariana Islands Training and Testing Supple-

mental Environmental Impact Statement that were planned for Feb. 26-27, in Guam and on Saipan. Once new dates, times and locations are determined, information will be provided to the public. **(PR)**

### Military training at Farallon de Medinilla

**ASAN, Guam**—The U.S. military will conduct training on Feb. 26 to March 1, from 8am to 7pm, at the island of Farallon de Medinilla.

It is recommended the public, fishermen and marine tour operators monitor the Coast Guard broadcast notice to mariners for advisories.

The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla will be in a 12-nautical mile radius of the island.

These types of trainings are designed to enhance the readiness of military person-

nel. Residents in surrounding areas should not be alarmed if they see or hear increased activity associated with the training. **(PR)**

### SILC focus group meetings on Rota, Tinian

The Statewide Independent Living Council will hold separate focus group meetings today, Feb. 27, 2019, at 6pm at the Rota Youth Center and Tinian Public Library to solicit public input for the new 3-year State Plan for Independent Living. For more information call 322-6537/8. **(PR)**

### MIFICPA to host tax seminar

The Marianas Institute of Filipino CPAs and Accountants, or MIFICPA, invites the public to this year's tax seminar on March 2, 2019, from 8am to 12pm, at the Hibiscus Hall

of the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan. This year's seminar will focus on tax updates for 2018/2019, changes in tax laws and tax filing requirements, among others.

The seminar will be conducted by David J. Burger, CPA, the managing partner of Burger, Comer & Magliari.

The registration fee for members is \$25, inclusive of membership fee, snacks and certificate of attendance. Non-members and non-accountants are also welcome for the same fee. Registration starts at 7:30am.

To facilitate the question-and-answer portion of the seminar, you can pre-register and turn in your question(s) ahead of time through the organizers. For reservation and more details, call or email: Angie Mamaril at 783-1857 ([angiehmamaril@yahoo.com](mailto:angiehmamaril@yahoo.com)); Lois Manese at 286-8663 ([eloisa\\_manese@yahoo.com](mailto:eloisa_manese@yahoo.com));

Cris Bucalig at 287-0945 ([cris\\_bong@yahoo.com](mailto:cris_bong@yahoo.com)); Rose Badidoy at 588 0425 ([roseanbadidoy@yahoo.com](mailto:roseanbadidoy@yahoo.com)); Butch Ordas at 789-9276 ([butchor-das@yahoo.com](mailto:butchor-das@yahoo.com)); Gloria Balila at [mngmbalila@yahoo.com](mailto:mngmbalila@yahoo.com); Paul Saniei ([paulangelosaniei@yahoo.com](mailto:paulangelosaniei@yahoo.com)); or Yho Villavicencio at 285-9017 ([yhobowl300@gmail.com](mailto:yhobowl300@gmail.com)). **(PR)**

### PH consulate to hold outreach on Saipan

The Philippine Consulate General in Agana, Guam, in coordination with Philippine Honorary Consul to CNMI Glicerio Arago, will conduct a consular outreach mission on Saipan on March 3 to 5, from 8am to 4pm at the Kristo Rai Parish in Garapan.

Biometrics and personal data capturing for ePassport applications will be done according to schedule. All ePassport applicants are reminded

to check the list so that they are aware of their respective schedules.


Those who are on the list of ePassport applicants are reminded to:

1. show up at the venue on the date and time indicated in the schedule; and
2. wear proper attire (i.e. with collar and sleeves)

For consular services, including passport renewal, that require civil registration documents (e.g. birth certificate and marriage certificate), documents from the Philippine Statistics Authority or from former National Statistics Office will be accepted.


Please note that personal appearance is required for all ePassport applications.

For confirmation and clarification, call (670) 233-6293 and ask for Mel Santos or email [eppt.pcgagana@gmail.com](mailto:eppt.pcgagana@gmail.com). **(PR)**



## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

Office of the Executive Director



### INVITATION FOR BIDS

#### CUC-IFB-19-012

#### ISLAND WIDE WATER METER INSTALLATION, SAIPAN

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Island Wide Water Meter Installation, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

*This project is funded by a grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of the approval for project award from USEPA.*

This Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity work consists of installing new service saddles, corporation stops, PVC service lines from the CUC water main to the meter, replacing defective water meters, installing new service laterals and new water meters, properly sizing existing service lines, installing a water meter on existing CUC service lines without a meter, relocating existing CUC water meters from private property to public easement, reconfiguring the orientation of water meters to easily identify customers, removing existing manifold systems, and as required, installing new service lines from the meter to the house plumbing. It may also be required to connect existing service lines to a new meter and/or house piping.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The Bid Package may be obtained, upon receipt of a non-refundable payment from the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check, or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable) for one IFB package set; at the CUC, Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Dandan, Saipan, between 7:30 AM to 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by a Site Visit is scheduled on **February 12, 2019 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No.15, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

**One (1) original and Seven (7) hard copies** must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "Island Wide Water Meter Installation, Saipan" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 6, 2019**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement the form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract.

A *Bid Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.


Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All questions or request for clarification regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on February 21, 2019** to Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC's Purchasing Administrator, via email - [manny.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:manny.sablan@cucgov.org) with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, Water/Wastewater Engineer - via email [nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org](mailto:nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org) and Christie Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Administrative Support Assistant - via email [christie.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:christie.sablan@cucgov.org).

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the best interest of the government. All bids shall become the property of CUC.


**GARY P. CAMACHO**  
Executive Director

**MANNY B. SABLAN**  
Procurement Administrator



## Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

Office of the Executive Director



### EMERGENCY REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

#### CUC-RFP-19-013

#### AGINGAN PRIMARY SCREEN PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified vendors for the attainment of a Primary Screen for the Agingan Wastewater Treatment Plant at CUC Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable) for one RFP package set. The RFP package consisting of the specifications and scope-of-work will be emailed to all registered prospective proposers email ID. Prospective Proposers must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division.

**One (1) original and four (5) hard copies**, along with an electronic copy of the proposal on a compact disk or USB Drive in PDF format must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-RFP-19-013, Agingan Primary Screen Project" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **March 21, 2019 at 10:00 AM (ChST)**. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

A *Proposal Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total proposal price must accompany the proposals. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or proposal bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful Proposer. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Proposers are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. Offerors shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion and revision of proposals, and such revision may be permitted after submission and prior to award for the purpose of obtaining the best and final offers. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing offerors.

All Offeror are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Offeror due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Offeror are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All responses to this RFP should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the proponent awarded a contract. Successful proponents will be required to submit a copy of a valid CNMI Business license in compliance with the Contractor's Registration and Licensing Laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, upon award of the contract. The Contractor and all subcontractors will be obligated to pay wage rates not less than the current CNMI minimum wage, prevailing through the period of contract, as indicated in the web page: <https://marianaslabor.net/>. The proponents shall be required to comply with all applicable CNMI and Federal Laws.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 7, 2019** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator at email address [manny.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:manny.sablan@cucgov.org) with a copy to Westen Knudsen, P.E., Senior Engineer for Water/Wastewater at email address [westen.knudsen@cucgov.org](mailto:westen.knudsen@cucgov.org) and Christie Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrative Technician, Senior at email address [christie.sablan@cucgov.org](mailto:christie.sablan@cucgov.org).

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

**GARY P. CAMACHO**  
Executive Director

**MANNY B. SABLAN**  
Purchasing Administrator



# Opinion

Hafa Adair

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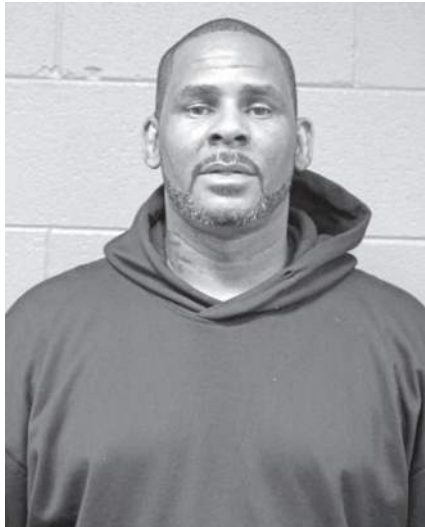
### EDITORIAL

## R. Kelly indicted: Will justice finally be served?

Chicago R&B superstar R. Kelly was indicted Friday on sexual abuse charges, finally bringing into the courts a growing set of accusations that portray him as a predator.

It is a long-awaited step that nonetheless came fairly quickly after this winter's Lifetime documentary "Surviving R. Kelly" turned up the heat, exposing alarming allegations against the performer to a wide new audience.

Kelly is charged with 10 counts of aggravated criminal sexual abuse for alleged misconduct against four victims, three of whom were under age



17 at the time, between 1998 and 2010.

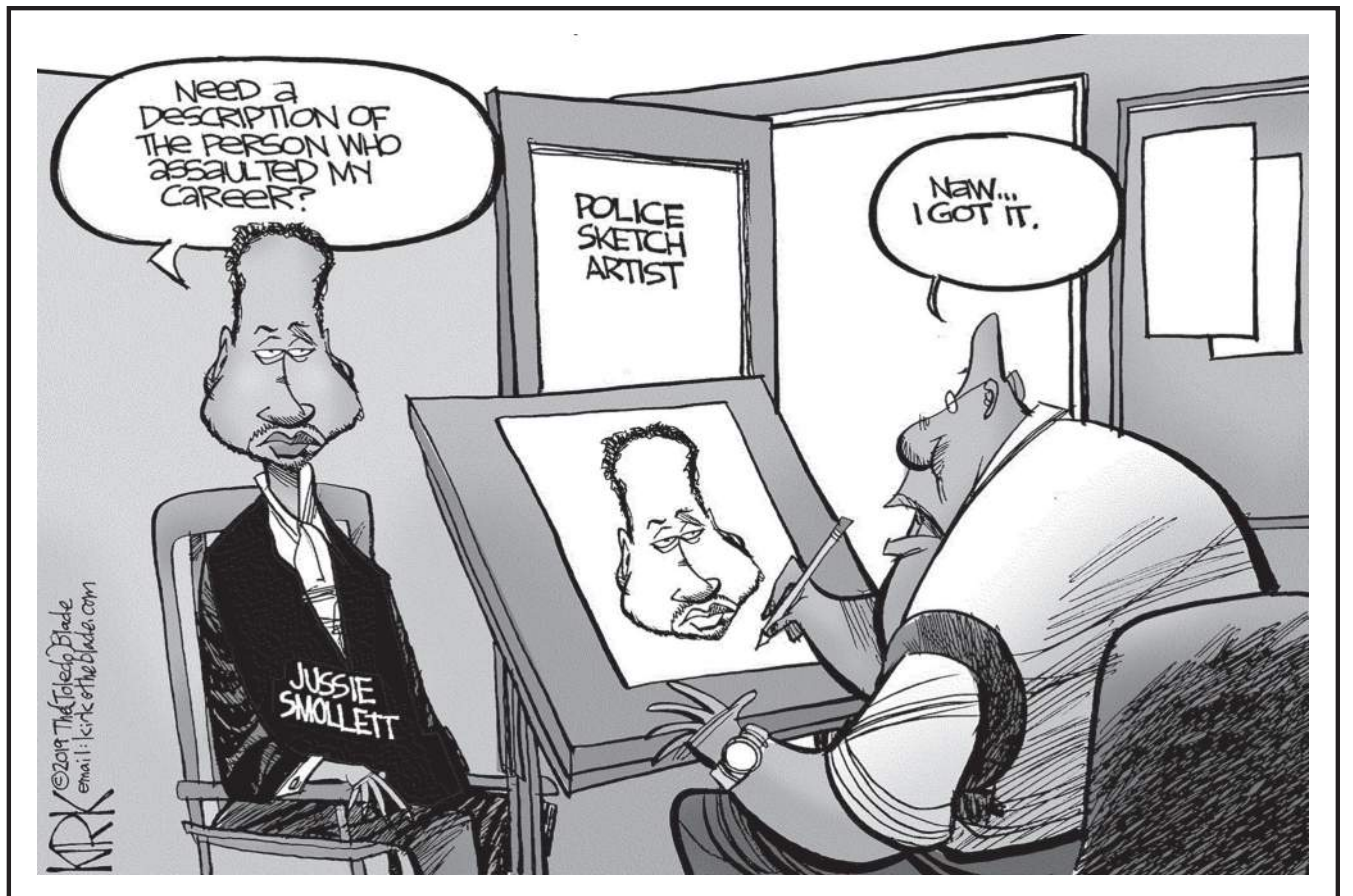
Disturbing news coverage of Kelly dates back more than two decades. He was acquitted of child pornography charges in 2008, but until now had not faced any other sex-crime related charges. Allegations swirled, but he played on. The Grammy Award-winning Kelly, whose "I Believe I Can Fly" won him mainstream popularity, has sold 32 million albums.

This winter, though, demands for justice thrummed. "Surviving R. Kelly" portrayed him as operating a sex cult involving girls who were kept isolated from family. #MeToo provided a social movement in which women could speak up and feel supported. Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx invited potential victims to come forward, and her office says it was inundated with tips. High-profile attorney Michael Avenatti provided her office with what he says is a tape of Kelly having sex with a then-14-year-old girl.

There was more to this winter's crescendo. A #MuteR-Kelly movement began, and his label, RCA Records, dropped the singer last month. A range of artists renounced him. Jim DeRogatis, the Chicago music journalist who has pursued the Kelly story for two decades, drew national attention for his persistence.

The court system will determine if Kelly is guilty of any crimes. But his arrest means that long-standing allegations against him will receive the legal attention they deserve. We hope the accusers can finally tell their stories, and that justice will be served.

(c)2019 Chicago Tribune



## 'America first' increasingly looks like America alone

**W**ASHINGTON—The annual Munich Security Conference is usually a somnolent affair, a ritual renewal of vows between the United States and its European allies. This year was different.

Germany's outgoing chancellor, Angela Merkel, finally said what she thinks of President Donald Trump.

Without using Trump's name, she described his "America first" foreign policy as one of ignoring allies and promoting nationalism—and noted that Germany tried that before World War II with catastrophic results.

"Pieces of the classic, familiar order ... are falling apart," she said. "We cannot just smash it. We need to cooperate."

The best course, she said, is to "stick with multilateralism—which was the lesson of the Second World War."

The mostly European audience gave her a standing ovation. Ivanka Trump, who listened stone-faced, did not stand.

Merkel had specific complaints, too.

She said Trump was wrong to withdraw from the 2015 nuclear accord with Iran ("depressing"). She warned that Trump's plan to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria could "strengthen Iran's and Russia's hand."

And she derided Trump's threat to declare imported cars a national security threat so he could raise tariffs. "BMW's largest plant is in South Carolina," she pointed out.

For the first two years of Trump's presidency, Merkel tried to persuade him to accept the traditional pattern of U.S.-European relations: periodic disputes over trade, or military policy, papered over with soothing words about transatlantic friendship and mutual interests.

No longer. The postwar relationship, which kept the peace and brought prosperity to Europe through the Cold War and in the decades since, is under threat from Washington.

Alarms are ringing in Western Europe over Trump's unilateral, transactional foreign policy. And for good reason: the Trump administration has taken direct aim at the European Union, a centerpiece of European statecraft since 1957.

If the EU collapses, some Europeans fear a new catastrophe: a fragmented Europe of feuding states, like the one that existed before World War II.

Europeans admit they helped create some of their problems. They haven't spent as much on defense as they promised; Trump is right about that.

The EU also hasn't delivered its promise of prosperity to southern tier countries like Spain, Italy and Greece. The influx of millions of refugees and economic migrants has caused a populist backlash, and even helped elect authoritarian governments in Hungary and Poland.

By **DOYLE MCMANUS**

Los Angeles Times

Doyle McManus is a Washington columnist for the *land* director of the journalism program at Georgetown University.



But the Trump administration is making those challenges worse.

In addition to questioning the need for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Trump has attacked the EU as a threat to U.S. interests. Asked last year who he viewed as America's global adversaries, the first name on Trump's list—before Russia, China, North Korea or Iran—was the European Union.

"I think the European Union is a foe, what they do to us in trade," he said.

He has even charged that the EU was founded principally to harm the United States. "They formed in order to take advantage of us," he said at a political rally last year.

European diplomats charge privately that Trump's stance is mostly a strategy to gain the upper hand in trade negotiations. "He'd rather negotiate one-on-one with small countries than with a large group that's a peer competitor," one explained.

But the EU isn't only about trade. It wasn't founded to sabotage U.S. exports; it was founded to stop Germany and France from going to war again, as they did three times between 1871 and 1945.

"The EU is the peacekeeping organization for Europe," a European official told me.

So when Trump and his aides wade into Europe's internal affairs and try to boost politicians who want to shatter the EU, that's not just a rough-and-tumble negotiating tactic. It's an existential threat to a project that European governments have been working on for more than 60 years.

"With friends like that, who needs enemies?" Donald Tusk, the Polish-born president of the European Council, tweeted last year.

Even as Trump works to undermine the EU, he's asking the Europeans to do more for him and his priorities.

He has pressed them, without success, to also quit the Iran nuclear deal, although most are honoring the new U.S. sanctions.

He wants them to send more troops to Syria, even though he's withdrawing U.S. forces.

He wants Germany to cancel a long-standing contract for a natural gas pipeline from Russia, and buy American gas instead.

And when they object—when

See **AMERICA** on Next Page



## EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

## Kutturan Chamoru

**G**i lemlen tautau, sige i famaguon mame madiskute hafa kutturan Chamoru. Finenina debi umakomprende haf' kuttura dispues 'nai umapula' haf' kutturan niha. Kuttura layeye pot modun linala' tautau.

Gaige gi antigu na komunidat natibu i gualu' yan tasi. Este i dos lugat 'nai maprebeniye mantension familia deste tutuhun tautau guine siha na islas. Antes yan dispues de gera 'nai manhalum i natibu gi moseria—lugat cho'chu—gi gobietnu yan praihet.

Usun gualu' yan tasi menus na tiempu soluke mabisita gi uttimun semana para umakontinua man-mananum yan inasisten pinegsai. Lau ti matgan i tautau-ta ginen hagas tradision. Esta pa'gu ma-usune tinanum yan pinegsai gi tatten guma' niha yan i lanchu.

Ti umagtus na patte gi linala' ta pot estague' na pisu sumusteni linala' mañainata deste antigu na tiempu. Ti umahñau lokue' na siempre sige ha' matulaika kuttura-ta gi karera.

**Siknifikasion:** Estague' 'nai matutuhun hinisgan haf' sustansian niha kumu man-dueñun este siha na petlas. Sige mona mas ma-aregla disposision futtunan niha. Marepara na siha i petmanente na dueñun petlas iya Marianas.

Tat mas guaguan na fuetsan natibu i direchoña umaregla futtunan i manatatte na famaguon-ta. I natibu kapitan este na asuntu!

Adumididi' u fan mattu guine na eskalera! Kontodu guahu malofanyu' guine na fina' katsada mina hu komprende kareran este na asuntu.

Hu nanaña para umamente i solu sahyan kuttura lau ti sumau-nau guine na konbetsasion. Siempre u fattu halum gi pituma 'nai debi fotnat na inadiñgan u tinatiye i asuntu.

**Namagof:** Kontentu siñienteg-hu 'nai hu huñgug famaguon-ta mahusga man-ginen manu siha. Señat na maseha ñaṅgun i asuntu man-preparau umapagaye i onru yan dignun natibu kumu siha i petmanente na tautau isla. Taya' siña umaregla futtunan famaguon-ta ke hita mismu.

Hu agradece i modun respetu 'nai madiskute asuntun niha. Manadagau rason unu yan otu gi hilu' inakomprende maseha difirensiau opiñonon. Grasiu yan agradeziyun na modun konbetsasion. Dispues 'nai mabira siha ya mafaisenyu' kuestion gi 'nos kuantus attikulu.

Hu apunta giya siha na taya' mas metgut na kuttura ke liṅgua-hen niha. Gigon unna' suha i liṅguahe manmatompu' i famaguon pot timatuṅgu' i primera na tinatten niha. Liṅguahe satbasion natibu esta i uttimu besis! Taya' otu fitme na sahyan ke liṅguahimu. Deste ha' anen mafañagumu gaige gi hila' mu!

**Liyaṅg:** Ha sedeyu' silensiu gi ha' anihu tumaitai tinige' San Lukas gi Santa Biblia pot lina' la' i Sainata. Guiya i periodista ni umadiñgane manadan man-menhalum haf' masusede gi tiempun Jesukristu. Guiya pumega papa' i matugi' na pasun i Sainata.

Deste tutuhun sumen popble i Sainata. Pot ihemplo, mafañagu gi un' liyaṅg ga' ga' ya pinega as nanaña (Santa Maria) gi un' establon ya inasiste. Felis hinanauña estake ha komple dose años ya ha tutuhun mamana' gue' ni tinagu' tataña as Yuus Tata gi templu.

Todu pot todú, ha osge tinagu pairastroña as San Jose mientras gagaige gi kañai mañainaña. Dispues 'nai humanau ha tutuhun mamana' gue' gi templu. Manadan man-sabiu manhineñaṅg ni taduṅg kinempreñaṅg pot tinagu' Yuus Tata. Sige mona, mahusga, makondena, makastiga, yan mapunu' gi kilu' us pot satbasion-ta. Kulan chagu' i asuntu lau pot futtunata na ha mattitgue' i Sainata.

Ta kontinua este na patte gi mamamaila' siha na attikulu. Atetuye umadelanta linala' espírituat pot satbasion-mu mismu! Siempre un' sienta tai achagua na kinententu yan mas trañkilo ha' animu!

**Silensiu:** Guaha 'nai ha gacha'yu' silensiu ha' ani-hu 'sino antes de oran deskansog-hu. Estotbu pot gai mensahe ni maput hu pega kalulot-hu kau mauleg pat baba i mamamaila'. Hu apellayu' gi disposision i Saina na u felis haf para u fatoigue hit.

Esta ha upus hit i primet silensiu—si Yutu—i tatatte ti siña hu

**By JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.**  
Special to the Saipan Tribune

*John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands. All views expressed by the author are his/her own and do not necessarily reflect the opinion and stance of the Saipan Tribune.*



pula' haf' sustansiaña ni pot dios. Puede ti iran Yuus i mamamaila' tat kumu dañkulu na linau 'sino hinalum tasi. Silensiu gi ha' ani-hu makat hu fataṅgaye pot tinatiye ti mauleg na sinisedi yan pinadesi.

Mauleg sa' matai dispues i pagyu as Wutip pot huli'e gi seṅsoṅ siha na megai trabiha sige ma-aregla tatte mayamag gima' niha. Makat na finapus para i familia. Debi u guaha aseguridad gi gima' familia piot gi dispues de minachum atdau.

**Tufai:** Lokue', guaha 'nai umemahalaṅ-yu' kanta siha ni sessu 'in kanta yan mañeluhu antes. Hu chule' pa'gu dandan-hu ukulele 'sino gitala ya hu rasgueo (strum). Deste kantan antes yan otu siha ineyag-hu sige pa'gu de hu usune maseha guaha 'nai mesgu' lago'hu.

Dandan naturat giya guahu. Estague' na talentu numa'e-yu' kam-pu mangana maseha dididi' para bai ayuda mañainahu gi bandan mantension familia. Apmam de ha katsuyu' este na patte gi ha' anihu deste ke estudiante-yu' gi kase nueve gradu gi high school.

Entalu gitala yan tambut 'nai sessu teṅga dumandan-yu' antes. Mauleg na ayudu gi mantension petsonat yan familia gi tiempun ha' ilas.

## Knitting controversy shows micro-aggression sensitivity going too far

**I**n January, a white female knitter, Karen Templer, wrote a blog about her excitement at being able to finally take a trip to India. She talked about the beauty and exoticism of a place that she had admired for so many years. "I've wanted to go to India for as long as I can remember," she wrote. "I've a lifelong obsession with the literature and history of the continent."

The backlash to the post was swift. An avalanche of readers accused her of being immersed in her white privilege, incapable of seeing how her description of India as an "alien" place was offensive and demeaning. The blogger immediately got the message and provided this supine apology:

"I have hurt, angered and disappointed a lot of people this week," she wrote, explaining: "I perpetuated the harmful notion that Indians (and POC in general) are 'other,' or even to be feared. People who are the target of racism every day were rightly offended by it, as were others. And I am so sorry."

The apology is almost worse than the attacks of "white privilege," because it shows how quickly we can be bullied into thinking that we have done something wrong simply because another person tells us we have.

Posts like Templer's are often accused of containing micro-aggressions. As defined in *Psychology Today*, micro-aggressions "are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership. In many cases, these hidden messages may invalidate the group identity or experiential reality of target persons, demean them on

a personal or group level, communicate they are lesser human beings, suggest they do not belong with the majority group, threaten and intimidate, or relegate them to inferior status and treatment."

Micro-aggressions are not your grandparent's form of bigotry. A noose hanging from a tree branch, a swastika on a tombstone, a beheaded statue of the Virgin Mary, or the word jihadist painted outside a mosque are all forms of psychological terrorism. They can also be the prelude to dangerous acts of physical terrorism, like the massacres at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh or the Mother Emanuel church in South Carolina.

But micro-aggressions have moved us to a new level, one that threatens to make us forget what true persecution looks like. Rather than focus on acts clearly committed to hurt a specific group of people, like the hate crimes described above, micro-aggressions can be any action someone perceives to be prejudiced.

It is never a good thing to deliberately try to hurt someone's feelings. Intentional cruelty is a corrosive acid, and we should call it out in the most vocal terms when we see it. There has been no dearth of criticisms of the president, and most are deserved.

But let's be clear. Saying mean things about someone is a breach of courtesy and kindness. It is not an assault on human dignity. To even suggest that micro-aggressions—such as using insensitive language in the knitting post, saying a female boss is too demanding (and I love you anyway, Amy Klobuchar), accidentally call-

**By CHRISTINE M. FLOWERS**  
Philadelphia Daily News

*Christine M. Flowers is a lawyer and columnist for the Philadelphia Daily News. Readers may send her email at cflowers1961@gmail.com.*



ing a trans person by the wrong pronoun, or even complimenting someone clumsily (such as Joe Biden's calling his future running mate, Barack Obama, "articulate")—are "shocking" and "egregious," on par with hateful prejudice, is outrageous.

You know why? Because that suggestion diminishes more consequential acts of dehumanization—concrete instances of violence and discrimination—that lead to horrors like the Holocaust. It can make us lose perspective on the continued, very real assaults on humanity still occurring, like the horrific wave of anti-Semitism sweeping France this month.

At worst, the preoccupation with micro-aggression lowers the bar on conceptions of evil—a troubling thing when there is so much real evil in the world to worry about.

## AMERICA

From Page 10

the Europeans say an alliance ought to be a two-way street—administration officials have sometimes threatened retaliation through economic sanctions or tariffs.

It's becoming a vicious cycle: The Trump administration pushes. The Europeans resist. The effect is to make it harder for old allies to cooperate in areas where they mostly agree.






It looks like a marriage on the rocks—without a marriage counselor. Unless you count former Vice President Joe Biden, who went to the Munich conference and advised the Europeans just to wait Trump out.

Until then, Trump's "America first" foreign policy is producing an outcome the president insists he doesn't want: America alone.

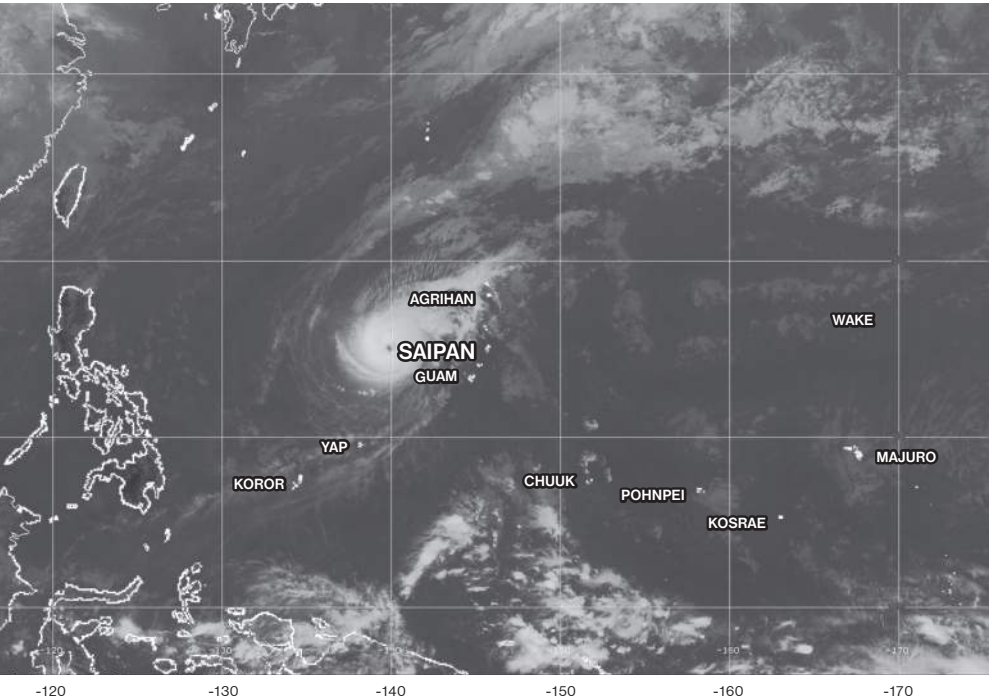




# The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY	
									
Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. Southeast winds around 15 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
86°	77°	87°	77°	87°	77°	87°	77°	87°	77°

## YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



**PICTURE TIME: 7:20 AM, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2019**  
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Radar shows isolated showers in the Marianas, and the eastern fringe of Super Typhoon Wutip is still visible on radar about 175 miles WNW of Guam. Winds have diminished to moderate to fresh, and seas are 8-9 feet at Ritidian buoy, with higher seas likely present in the western Marianas waters.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: [www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/](http://www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/)

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	84° / 75°	
Palau	Partly Cloudy	83° / 76°	
Yap	Mostly Sunny	85° / 78°	
Chuuk	Mostly Sunny	85° / 79°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorm	84° / 79°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorm	84° / 79°	
Majuro	Partly Cloudy	84° / 79°	

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Sunny	70° / 57°	
Beijing	Sunny	61° / 30°	
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	75° / 68°	
Honolulu	Sunny	74° / 62°	
London	Partly Cloudy	61° / 43°	
Los Angeles	Sunny	62° / 55°	
Manila	Partly Cloudy	90° / 73°	
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	88° / 61°	
Miami	Sunny	78° / 72°	
New York	Windy	45° / 27°	
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	54° / 39°	
Paris	Sunny	64° / 36°	
Busan	Partly Cloudy	55° / 43°	
Rome	Partly Cloudy	70° / 39°	
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	64° / 45°	
San Francisco	Showers	56° / 47°	
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	52° / 30°	
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	54° / 39°	
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	45° / 39°	



### NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- \*11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at [www.nmicrimestoppers.net](http://www.nmicrimestoppers.net)

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
02:57 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.48	
07:50 AM	LOW TIDE	1.12	
1:11 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.71	
8:59 PM	LOW TIDE	0.14	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:35 AM	6:24 PM
Thursday	6:35 AM	6:24 PM
Friday	6:34 AM	6:24 PM
Saturday	6:33 AM	6:24 PM
Sunday	6:33 AM	6:24 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	12:46 AM	12:26 PM	-
Thursday	1:38 AM	1:14 PM	-
Friday	2:30 AM	2:03 PM	-
Saturday	3:19 AM	2:52 PM	-
Sunday	4:06 AM	3:42 PM	-

### NEWS DESK

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 21, 2019							
DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117	9:15am	9:55am	Daily	UA174	7:30am	8:11am	Daily
UA105	6:25pm	7:05pm	2, 4	UA104	4:50pm	5:31pm	2, 4
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
7C3451	3:15am	6:30am	Daily	7C3452	9:35pm	2:00am+1	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
				7C3452	10:05pm	2:00am+1	1
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ626	2:10am	6:00am	1	7C3402	10:10am	3:30pm	Daily
OZ626	2:50am	6:40am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	OZ625	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
				OZ625	8:20pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7C3403	4:35am	8:25am	Daily				
7C3401	4:30pm	8:25pm	Daily	7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)				SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
3U8648	6:10am	8:50am	1, 4, 5, 7	3U8647	10:20pm	4:50am+1	3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (HGH)				HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN			
JD396	7:30am	11:00am	1	JD395	8:05am	3:30pm	4
JD396	4:50pm	7:55pm	4	JD395	9:35pm	5:00am+1	7
SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)				GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN			
3U8646	4:30am	7:55am	2, 6	3U8645	7:55pm	2:40am+1	1, 5
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)				BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN			
MU764	1:30am	6:35am	3, 5, 7	MU763	4:40pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183	9:15am	9:40pm	2, 5 via GUM	UA182/174	12:40am	8:11am+1	3, 6 via GUM
UA117/183	9:15am	9:50pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM	PR110/UA174	10:05pm	8:11am+1	Daily via GUM
UA117/193	9:15am	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR	UA192/174	10:30pm	8:11am+1	2, 5 via GUM-ROR
UA105/183	4:45pm	9:40pm	2 via GUM	UA184/174	10:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA105/183	4:45pm	9:50pm	4 via GUM				
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)				HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN			
HX077	1:50am	5:15am	1, 4	OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN	OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN				
UO43	5:45am	8:40am	1, 3, 5, 7	HX076	5:15pm	12:15am+1	3, 7
UA117/159	9:15am	11:00pm	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via GUM	UO42	6:50pm	1:45am+1	7
‘				UO42	9:30pm	4:25am+1	2, 4, 6
UA105/159	4:45pm	11:00pm	2, 4 via GUM	UA116/174	11:45pm	8:11am+1	2, 4 via GUM
				UA116/174	11:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, PR PAL Express; ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

SAIPAN TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily
1302	11:30AM	12:00PM	Daily
1303	4:00PM	4:30PM	Daily
ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily
3102	1:45PM	2:15PM	Daily
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily
ROTA TO GUAM			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily
GUAM TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily
SAIPAN TO TINIAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
1202	8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily

1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
1204	10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
1205	11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily
1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
1210	4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
1211	5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
1212	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily
TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
2103	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
2104	9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
2105	10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily
2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
2112	5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
2113	6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily



# Business

AP  
U.S. and Chinese delegations meet in the Indian Treaty Room in the Eisenhower Executive Office Building on the White House complex, during continuing meetings on the U.S.-China bilateral trade relationship, Thursday, Feb. 21, 2019, in Washington.

## Survey: American companies worry US-Chinese ties will worsen

**BEIJING (AP)**—American companies in China increasingly worry U.S.-Chinese relations will deteriorate and are “hedging their bets” by delaying investments or moving operations, a business group reported Tuesday.

The report by the American Chamber of Commerce in China sounded a note of caution amid optimistic offi-

cial statements about possible progress toward settling a U.S.-Chinese tariff war.

Companies ranked “bilateral tensions” as a top challenge alongside chronic frustrations with rising costs and unclear laws and enforcement in the state-dominated economy, the chamber said.

Some 37 percent of 314 companies that responded to

a survey in November and December expect relations to deteriorate, more than double 2017’s level of 16 percent, the chamber said. Another 37 percent expect relations to stay at their current fraught level.

The report added to signs of the growing long-term impact of the battle over Beijing’s technology ambitions.

President Donald Trump

announced he would postpone a March 1 deadline for another tariff hike on Chinese imports after the two governments reported “substantial progress” in weekend talks. Both Trump acknowledged many of their disputes were too complex to be resolved soon.

In a report written ahead of Sunday’s announcement, the chamber cautioned tensions are “increasingly driven by fundamental differences” between the two economic systems.

“A growing number of companies are hedging their bets,” the report said. It said nearly one-quarter of those surveyed were postponing investments

or moving supply their supply chains to avoid the impact of possible tariff increases.

China is a “high priority” for most companies but many “appear to be tempering their investment plans,” the report said. It said they cite stronger competition from Chinese rivals, rising costs and pressure on profits.

UBS reported in January that 37 percent of 200 manufacturers surveyed by the bank have shifted out of China over the past 12 months. The threat of U.S. tariff hikes was the “dominating factor” for nearly half, while others moved because of higher costs or tighter environmental regulation.

The American cham-

ber’s European counterpart has reported similar unease among its members and reluctance to invest.

“Survey results suggest that we are yet to see the full impact of the tariffs,” said the American chamber report.

Companies also cited frustration with Chinese market restrictions and regulation.

Three-quarters of companies in technology and other research-based industries said market restrictions hamper their operations, the chamber said. It almost half of companies surveyed believe Chinese policies are enforced differently against foreign and domestic competitors.

## Main UK opposition party takes step to back new Brexit vote

**LONDON (AP)**—Prime Minister Theresa May returned from a seemingly unproductive meeting with European Union leaders Monday to a growing attempt by British lawmakers to stop her from taking Britain out of the EU on March 29 without a divorce deal.

With May and the EU at odds over not just how, but when Brexit should happen, her political opponents were getting increasingly desperate to take control of Britain’s muddled departure from the bloc.

At an EU-Arab League summit in Egypt, the EU warned Britain it faces the prospect of delaying its planned March 29 departure or the consequences of a chaotic exit. European Council President Donald Tusk, who chairs meetings of EU nation leaders, said Monday it would be “rational” to postpone Brexit day.

May insisted she intends for Britain to leave as planned in a little more than a month. But

her often divided opponents may be coalescing around a plan to prevent Britain crashing out of the EU with no agreement in place.

The main opposition Labour Party took a big step Monday toward backing a new referendum on the country’s EU membership.

The party has previously said it would support a referendum as a last resort if it could not secure a new election or make changes to May’s EU divorce deal. Britain’s Parliament has so far rejected the deal struck between May’s government and the bloc, and is due to hold a series of votes Wednesday on next steps in the Brexit process.

Labour has proposed its own withdrawal plan as an alternative to the government’s deal with the EU. The party said Monday it would back a second public vote if the House of Commons rejects its plan this week, as is widely expected.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said the party is com-

mitted to “putting forward or supporting an amendment in favor of a public vote to prevent a damaging Tory Brexit being forced on the country.”

The party did not specify what voters might be asked to consider in any future vote, though it has previously said the option of Britain remaining an EU member would be included.

Labour has previously said it would only support a second referendum as a last resort if it could not secure a new general election or make changes to May’s divorce deal.

The change in approach follows the resignations of nine Labour lawmakers last week, partly over the party’s failure to back another Brexit referendum. It is likely to cheer many party members, who have backed calls for a so-called “people’s vote.”

While there is little chance of a second referendum taking place without the support of Labour, the path to another Brexit vote is far from clear.

## Yellen critical of Trump’s grasp of economic policy

**WASHINGTON (AP)**—Former Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen says she doubts that President Donald Trump has a good grasp of economic policy or even knows the Federal Reserve’s mandates.

“I doubt that he would even be able to say that the Fed’s goals are maximum employment and price stability,” Yellen said in an interview with radio program “Marketplace.”

She said Trump has made various inaccurate remarks about the Fed such as that the central bank has an objective for the exchange rate for the dollar that is aimed at supporting the president’s trade policies.

She said comments like that show a “lack of understanding

of the impact of the Fed on the economy and appropriate policy goals.”

Asked in the interview released Monday if she felt Trump had a grasp of macroeconomic policy, Yellen said, “No I do not.”

The comments marked Yellen’s most pointed criticism of Trump since he decided not to nominate her for a second term as Fed leader. She left the Fed a year ago and was succeeded as chairman by Powell.

Yellen is now a distinguished fellow in residence at the Brookings Institution in Washington.

Yellen said she did not think that Trump’s sharp attacks on Powell and the Fed last year were having a significant im-

pact yet on the Fed’s ability to manage the economy. But she said if the attacks continued, Trump could “undermine confidence in the Fed and I think that would be a bad thing.”

Trump last year was sharply critical of the Fed’s string of interest rate hikes, saying they were depressing stock prices and represented his biggest threat.

However, since the Fed signaled in January that it planned to be “patient” in moving rates higher, an announcement that has triggered a stock rally, Trump has softened his comments. He had what was described as a cordial dinner with Powell and Fed Vice Chairman Richard Clarida earlier this month.



# Nation

## Facing prison, Manafort asks for leniency in Mueller case

WASHINGTON (AP)—Paul Manafort, the longtime political consultant who once led Donald Trump's presidential campaign, asked a federal judge for leniency Monday as he faces the potential of spending the rest of his life in prison in criminal cases stemming from the Russia investigation.

In a new court filing, Manafort's attorneys described the 69-year-old as a victim of circumstance, prosecuted by special counsel Robert Mueller only because the government couldn't make the case that he colluded with the Kremlin's interference in the 2016 presidential election. They also dismissed prosecutors' characterization of Manafort as a hardened criminal, saying he was merely a wealthy consultant who committed "garden variety" crimes by illegally lobbying for Ukrainian interests and hiding millions from the IRS.

"The Special Counsel's attempt to portray him as a life-long and irredeemable felon is beyond the pale and grossly overstates the facts before this Court," they argued, noting that the prosecution has "devastated him personally, professionally, and financially."

The lawyers' arguments echoed much of the criticism leveled at the Russia investigation by Trump, who has increasingly cast the probe as a politically motivated "witch hunt" even as Mueller has methodically brought charges



Members of the defense team for Paul Manafort, from left, Richard Westling, Tim Wang and Kevin Downing, walk to federal court Wednesday, Feb. 13, 2019, in Washington.

against six of his associates, including his former personal lawyer, his one-time national security adviser and a long-time confidant. The filing also comes as Manafort's attorneys have sought to contain the fallout from the unraveling of his plea deal this month.

Manafort pleaded guilty last year to two felony counts—conspiracy against the United States and conspiracy to ob-

struct justice—related to his illegal lobbying. The plea came after a jury in a separate case in Virginia convicted Manafort on eight financial charges involving the hiding of millions of dollars from the IRS that he made overseas.

As part of the plea agreement, Manafort agreed to cooperate with federal prosecutors, but late last year, Mueller's team said he had

lied to federal agents and a grand jury. In a ruling earlier this month, U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson, who will decide Manafort's sentence, agreed. She found that he had lied about several subjects, including his interactions with Konstantin Kilimnik, a business associate who the U.S. says has ties to Russian intelligence.

Manafort, who has been jailed since June, hasn't been accused of any crimes related to Russian election interference, but court papers have revealed that Manafort gave Kilimnik polling data related to the Trump campaign during the 2016 election. A Mueller prosecutor also said that an August 2016 meeting between the two men goes to the "heart"

of the Russia probe. The meeting involved a discussion of a potential peace plan between Russia and Ukraine, but many other details about it have been redacted in court papers.

In the filing Monday, Manafort's lawyers asked Jackson to choose a sentence that is "significantly below the statutory maximum" of five years on each count. They also asked that any sentence run at the same time as any prison time in the separate case in Virginia, where he faces the possibility of more than 19 years behind bars.

Even as Manafort's lawyers said their client takes responsibility for his actions, they sought to downplay his crimes, noting that his conduct, "while certainly illegal, unquestionably falls on the less serious end of the spectrum of federal felonies." In the witness tampering allegations, for example, they agree it was improper, but they stressed that Manafort didn't offer the witnesses bribes or threaten them with physical harm to give false testimony.

Regarding the illegal lobbying, the attorneys argued that such cases are rarely prosecuted and, but for Mueller, their client likely would have avoided indictment. Manafort's case "involves a magnitude of harshness previously unknown in the enforcement" of the statute known as the Foreign Agents Registration Act, they wrote.

## Technology helps San Francisco erase 8,000 pot convictions

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Over 8,000 marijuana-related convictions were erased or reduced using a technological approach that prosecutors nationwide should adopt to address a growing backlog of criminal cases eligible for modification, San Francisco's district attorney announced Monday.

San Francisco is the first California county to announce full compliance with the state's broad legalization of marijuana that also made an estimated 200,000 past pot convictions eligible for erasure or reduction.

San Francisco District Attorney George Gascon credited the nonprofit technology organization Code for America for solving the biggest hurdle to identifying eligible cases dating back decades.

When voters passed Proposition 64 in 2016 to allow adult use of marijuana, they also eliminated several pot-related crimes. The proposition also applied retroactively,

but provided no mechanism or guidance on how those eligible could erase their convictions or have felonies reduced to misdemeanors.

A few hundred people hired attorneys, paid court fees and filed petitions to modify their records since November 2016, but the vast majority of convictions still remain untouched. Many district attorneys throughout the state said they lack the resources to sift through and review decades' worth of criminal cases to identify eligible convictions.

In January 2018, Gascon announced his office would take on the time-consuming task of sifting through many thousands of criminal cases to identify eligible marijuana convictions. Until then, only 23 people who hired lawyers and paid court fees took advantage of the new law in San Francisco.

In May, when Gascon announced a partnership with Code for America, his office managed to identify and dis-

miss a little more 1,000 eligible misdemeanor cases. Since then, an additional 8,132 cases have been identified. Gascon said a total of 9,300 cases dating back to 1975 will be dropped or reduced without cost, active participation and, in many cases, the knowledge of the defendants.

"We don't have to do it," Gascon said Monday. "It was just a matter of dignity."

Code for America is a San Francisco-based nonprofit group that seeks to use technology to make government more efficient. Director Jennifer Pahlka said coders developed a "light weight" and simple computer-based algorithm dubbed "Clear My Record" to quickly identify eligible cases. The program automatically fills out forms to be filed with the courts.

Pahlka said Monday that Code for America was working with several other California district attorneys to identify eligible marijuana cases in their counties.

## ACROSS THE NATION

### Listeria prompts recall for green beans, butternut squash

MIAMI (AP)—A Florida company has issued a voluntary recall of Marketside brand green beans and butternut squash because of a possible Listeria contamination. Southern Specialties Inc. of Pompano Beach, Florida, announced the recall Monday, warning that the Listeria monocytogenes bacteria can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in young children, frail or elderly people, and others with weakened immune systems. Even healthy adults can suffer symptoms like high fever, severe headache, stiffness, nausea, abdominal pain and diarrhea. The company says it shipped the recalled product to one retail distribution center. Most of the product was retrieved, but some product shipped earlier this month might have reached stores in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, South Carolina and Tennessee.

### North Carolina Republicans appeal order voiding amendments

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP)—Republican legislative leaders have appealed a court ruling striking down new North Carolina constitutional amendments mandating photo identification to vote and lower caps on income tax rates. The notice filed on Monday with the Court of Appeals challenges Friday's decision by a Wake County judge voiding legislative direc-

tives to put the amendments on the ballot and voter approval of them in November. Judge Bryan Collins ruled the 2017-18 General Assembly that approved the amendment referendums last year were illegally established because federal courts had declared legislative district boundaries illegal gerrymanders. The ruling doesn't specifically cancel a December law implementing the voter ID mandates, but the decision calls into question whether it will stand. GOP lawmakers say the ruling threatens the validity of laws approved over an 18-month period.

### Vermont senator: State to receive withheld federal grants

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP)—U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy says approximately \$2.3 million in U.S. Department of Justice grants that have been withheld from Vermont over an immigration policy dispute with the Trump administration will be released. The Democrat says the grants for public safety and to fight the opioid epidemic were withheld due to Trump's policies regarding so-called "sanctuary cities" that refuse to cooperate with federal immigration agencies. Vermont Public Safety Commissioner Tom Anderson said Monday that the Justice Department concluded that Vermont State Police fully comply with the requirements of federal law. The Justice Department didn't respond to an email seeking comment after hours. Anderson says the Legislature and state police have always balanced ensuring immigrants living in the U.S. illegally feel safe reporting crimes with the obligation to comply with federal law.



# Asia

## Kim Jong Un arrives in Vietnam for summit with Trump

**DONG DANG, Vietnam** (AP)—North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, grinning broadly and waving at a crowd gathered on a cold, rainy morning, stepped off his armored train Tuesday after a long ride that started in Pyongyang and wound through China to this Vietnamese border town ahead of his second nuclear summit with President Donald Trump.

Kim, dressed in his trademark dark Mao suit, shook hands with officials as Vietnamese troops in crisp, white uniforms and black boots stood at attention on a red carpet beneath large North Korean and Vietnamese flags at the Dong Dang railway station on the China-Vietnam border.

A crowd gathered along the road near the station to wave North Korean flags and bouquets of flowers as the North Korean leader stepped into a black limousine that was then surrounded by burly, crewcut bodyguards who ran alongside their leader as he left the station. Press reports speculate that Kim will be driven to Ha-

noi, the Vietnamese capital, ahead of his Wednesday meeting with Trump, but officials shared no details about the specifics of a summit that the world will be watching closely.

Trump was flying to Hanoi from Washington. Kim's arrival comes as Vietnamese officials scramble to finish preparations for a rushed summit that's meant to deal with one of Asia's biggest security challenges: North Korea's pursuit of a nuclear program that stands on the verge of viably threatening any target on the planet.

Although many experts are skeptical Kim will give up the nukes he likely sees as his best guarantee of continued rule, there was a palpable, carnival-like excitement among many in Hanoi as the final preparations were made for the meeting.

Officials in Hanoi said they only had about 10 days to prepare for the summit—much less than the nearly two months Singapore had before the first Trump-Kim meeting

last year—but still vowed to provide airtight security for the two leaders.

"Security will be at the maximum level," Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Le Hoai Trung told reporters.

The ultra-tight security will be appreciated by North Korean authorities, who are

extremely vigilant about the safety of Kim, the third member of his family to rule the North with absolute power. Kim's decision to take a train, not a plane, may have been influenced by the better ability to control security.

Vietnam is eager to show off its huge economic and development improvements

since the destruction of the Vietnam War, but the country also tolerates no dissent and is able to provide the kind of firm hand not allowed by more democratic potential hosts.

Vietnam has announced an unprecedented traffic ban along a possible arrival route for Kim. The Communist Party's Nhan Dan newspaper

quoted the Roads Department as saying the ban will affect the 169-kilometer (105-mile) stretch of Highway One from Dong Dang, on the border with China, to Hanoi.

There are high expectations for the Hanoi summit after a vague declaration at the first meeting in June in Singapore that disappointed many.



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un waves from a car after arriving by train in Dong Dang in Vietnamese border town Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019, ahead of his second summit with U.S. President Donald Trump.

### ASIAN BRIEFS

#### China county suspends fracking after earthquakes kill 2

**BEIJING** (AP)—A county in western China has suspended drilling for shale gas after a protest by residents who suspected fracking work was the cause of a series of earthquakes that led to two deaths. The first quake hit Sichuan province's Rongxian county on Sunday morning, followed by two more, including a magnitude 4.9 temblor on Monday afternoon that caused the two fatalities. Twelve people were injured, the county government said in a message on its microblog. Mining activities and handling of dangerous chemicals were also suspended but would be gradually restored, it said. It didn't directly link the quakes to fracking, but acknowledged residents' "suspicions." Those measures were taken after about 1,000 area residents accompanied by 2,000 onlookers rallied outside a local government headquarters to demand that fracking be stopped, the government said in its statement. It said the crowd later dispersed without incident. Street protests over pollution and other environmental hazards are increasingly common in China, often organized over social media.

The government statement said quakes were occurring "frequently" but gave no other details. The U.S. Geological Service said the 4.9 magnitude quake struck at a relatively shallow depth of 10 kilometers (6.21 miles).

#### Pakistan building collapse kills 2 in Karachi, traps others

**KARACHI, Pakistan** (AP)—A Pakistani rescue official says at least two bodies have been recovered from a three-story building that collapsed in a suburb of the southern port city of Karachi. Mohammad Shaukat says the small residential building collapsed as construction work was underway next to it in the city's Malir neighborhood on Monday morning. Shaukat says four injured, including a woman and two children, have been rescued. He says rescue workers and volunteers are searching for more people. The narrowness of the street is preventing them from bringing in more heavy equipment. Police officer Amir Farooqi says it's unclear how many were trapped but the building housed two families with a total of about 13 people. Lack of implementation of safety regulations and shoddy construction often cause such incidents in Pakistan.

## Australian Cardinal Pell convicted of molesting 2 choirboys

**MELBOURNE, Australia** (AP)—The most senior Catholic cleric ever charged with child sex abuse has been convicted of molesting two choirboys moments after celebrating Mass, dealing a new blow to the Catholic hierarchy's credibility after a year of global revelations of abuse and cover-up.

Cardinal George Pell, Pope Francis' top financial adviser and the Vatican's economy minister, bowed his head but then regained his composure as the 12-member jury delivered unanimous verdicts in the Victoria state County Court on Dec. 11 after more than two days of deliberation.

The court had until Tuesday forbidden publication of any details about the trial.

Pell faces a potential maximum 50-year prison term after a sentencing hearing that begins on Wednesday. He lodged an appeal last week against the convictions.

Details of the trial had been suppressed because until Tuesday, Pell had faced a second trial in April on charges that he indecently assaulted

two boys aged 9 or 10 and 11 or 12 as a young priest in the late 1970s in a public pool in his hometown of Ballarat.

Prosecutor Fran Dalziel told the court on Tuesday that the Ballarat charges had been dropped and asked for the suppression order to be lifted.

"This is not a special case," Dalziel said.

The victim who testified at Pell's trial said after the conviction was revealed that he has experienced "shame, loneliness, depression and struggle." In his statement, the man said it had taken him years to understand the impact the assault had on his life.

Pell's lawyer Robert Richter initially wanted details of the trial suppressed until his appeal was heard, but later withdrew the application.

Pell was surrounded by a crush of cameras and members of the public as he was ushered from the courthouse to a waiting car. "You're a monster!" one man shouted. "You're going to burn in hell, you freak!"

"Are you sorry?" one woman

shouted. Pell did not respond.

Another of Pell's lawyers, Paul Galbally, said Pell continued to maintain his innocence.

"Although the cardinal originally faced allegations from a number of complainants, all of those complaints and allegations save for the matters that are subject to the appeal have all been either withdrawn or discontinued," Galbally told reporters outside.

Pell has initially been charged with more than 20 charges of sexual abuse against various complainants.

The revelations came in the same month that the Vatican announced Francis approved the expulsion from the priesthood for a former high-ranking American cardinal, Theodore McCarrick, for sexual abuse of minors and adults.

The convictions were also confirmed days after Francis concluded his extraordinary summit of Catholic leaders summoned to Rome for a tutorial on preventing clergy sexual abuse and protecting children from predator priests.

The lifting of the suppress-

sion order was welcomed by SNAP, a U.S. support group for victim of clergy abuse.

"We hope that his conviction will not only bring healing to his victims in Australia but hope to survivors across the world who are yearning for accountability at the top levels of the church," SNAP said in a statement. "We believe today's conviction will make Australian children safer and parents and parishioners better informed about how to prevent sexual abuse."

The jury convicted Pell of abusing two 13-year-old boys whom he had caught swigging sacramental wine in a rear room of Melbourne's St. Patrick's Cathedral in late 1996, as hundreds of worshippers were streaming out of Sunday services.

Pell, now 77 but 55 at the time, had just been named the most senior Catholic in Australia's second-largest city, Melbourne.

The jury also found Pell guilty of indecently assaulting one of the boys in a corridor more than a month later.



# World

## Pence in Colombia announces new sanctions on Maduro

**BOGOTA, Colombia (AP)**—The Trump administration announced new sanctions Monday on allies of Venezuela's Nicolas Maduro as it struggles to find new ways to boost his opponent after an effort to deliver humanitarian aid to the economically devastated nation faltered amid strong resistance from security forces loyal to the socialist leader.

Vice President Mike Pence arrived in the Colombian capital for an emergency summit of regional leaders to discuss the deepening crisis and immediately met with Juan Guaido, the opposition leader the U.S. and 50 other nations recognize as Venezuela's rightful president.

In a speech, Pence urged regional partners to freeze oil assets controlled by Maduro, transfer the proceeds to Guaido and restrict visas for Maduro's inner circle. He said the U.S. was imposing more sanctions on four pro-government governors, including a close Maduro ally who negotiated the release of an American jailed for more than two years.

"It's time to do more," Pence said. "The day is com-



Venezuela's self-proclaimed interim president Juan Guaido, Colombia's President Ivan Duque and Vice President Mike Pence, pose for a photo after a meeting of the Lima Group concerning Venezuela at the Foreign Ministry in Bogota, Colombia, Monday, Feb. 25, 2019.

manders have come forward to challenge Maduro despite almost-daily calls by Guaido and the U.S. to do so.

That's left many asking what Guaido and the U.S. can do to break the stalemate.

The Lima Group, in an 18-point declaration signed by 10 nations and Guaido, reiterated their call on the Venezuelan military to recognize the opposition leader as their commander in chief, urged the International Criminal Court to declare Maduro's aid blockade a crime against humanity and pressed the United Nations to play a bigger role in resolving the crisis.

For now, the U.S. is showing no signs it is considering a military intervention to remove Maduro.

During his visit, Pence repeated President Donald Trump's threat that "all options are on the table" but gingerly avoided talking about the potential for military action.

Instead, he stuck to traditional policy tools that so far have only hardened Maduro's resolve. Foremost among them was the addition of four governors to a growing list of more than 50 Venezuelan officials under sanctions and blocked from doing business or having accounts in the U.S.

ing soon when Venezuela's long nightmare will end, when Venezuela will once more be free, when her people will see a new birth of freedom, in a nation reborn to libertad."

Hours later, Venezuela's government issued a statement accusing the U.S. and the Lima Group countries of conducting "a ferocious campaign to oust" Maduro by trampling on basic

international human rights.

The statement also rejected Pence's announcements, accusing him of attempting "to give orders so that other countries join the vulgar plundering" that Washington is pursuing against Venezuela's assets.

Pence's appearance before the Lima Group comes at an important crossroads for the coalition of mostly conservative Latin American nations and Canada that has joined forces to pressure Maduro. A month after Guaido declared himself interim president at an outdoor rally, hopes that support for Maduro inside the military would quickly crum-

ble have faded.

Over the weekend, security forces on the borders with Colombia and Brazil fired tear gas and buckshot on activists waving Venezuelan flags while escorting trucks with emergency medical and food kits. Four people were killed and at least 300 wounded, although only a few were hospitalized.

While Colombian authorities said more than 160 soldiers deserted their posts and sought refuge across the border over the weekend, the highest-ranking among them was a National Guard major. No battalion or division com-

## Syria's Assad visits Iran in rare trip abroad

**TEHRAN, Iran (AP)**—Syrian President Bashar Assad has made an unannounced trip to Iran, where he met with the supreme leader and other top officials to discuss the planned U.S. troop withdrawal and Turkey's efforts to set up a buffer zone in northern Syria, state media reported Monday.

Assad met with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Hassan Rouhani on the rare trip abroad—his third since the civil war broke out in 2011. The other two trips were to Russia.

Tehran has given the Syrian government billions of dollars in aid and sent Iran-backed fighters to battle alongside his forces—assistance that, along with Russian air power, has helped turn the tide in Assad's favor.

Syrian and Iranian media released photos showing Assad warmly embracing Khamenei and shaking hands with Rouhani. The visit was not announced beforehand, and both countries made it public late Monday.

Iran's semi-official Fars news agency said Khamenei told the visiting Assad that "the buffer zone that Americans are after in Syria is among dangerous plots that should be rejected," and that

the U.S. plan to maintain a presence in Syria near the Iraqi border "is another sample of their designs."

U.S. President Donald Trump announced in December that all American forces would leave Syria, but he recently backtracked in the face of intense criticism, saying about 200 soldiers would remain indefinitely to help keep the peace alongside Syrian partners and prevent a resurgence of the Islamic State group.

U.S. officials said Trump's decision authorizing a small number of U.S. troops to stay is a key step in creating a larger multinational observer force that would monitor a so-called safe zone along Syria's border with Turkey. The buffer zone is meant to prevent clashes between Turkey and U.S.-backed Kurdish forces. It is also aimed at preventing Assad's forces and Iran-backed fighters from seizing more territory.

Syrian officials have blasted Turkey's plans for such a safe zone, saying both Turkish and U.S. troops are occupiers.

Assad accused the U.S. and its regional allies like Saudi Arabia of creating rifts among various religious and ethnic groups in Syria, saying such efforts have backfired.

"Today in Syria, Kurds and tribes have good relations with the government," he said, according to Fars.

Syrian state TV said Assad "thanked the Islamic Republic's leadership and people for what they have given to Syria during the war." Assad's office said "both sides expressed their satisfaction with the strategic levels reached between the two countries in all fields."

Khamenei said Iran is "proud" of the assistance it offers to Syria, Fars reported.

Syria's conflict began almost exactly eight years ago, when Arab Spring-inspired protests broke out against the Assad family's decades-long rule.

The protests prompted a harsh response from Syrian security forces, which led to the emergence of an insurgency. The resulting war has killed some 450,000 people and driven millions from their homes.

The visit to Iran comes a day before a trip by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to Russia for talks expected to focus on Iran's role in Syria. Israel has said it will not tolerate a permanent Iranian military presence in Syria, and it has carried out scores of airstrikes against Iran-linked targets there.

## US airstrike in Somalia kills 35 al-Shabab extremists

**JOHANNESBURG (AP)**—The United States military said Monday that its latest airstrike in Somalia killed 35 fighters with the al-Shabab extremist group not far from the Ethiopian border.

The U.S. military command for the African continent said Sunday's airstrike targeted the al-Qaida-linked fighters as they were traveling in a rural area about 23 miles (37 kilometers) east of Beledweyne in central Hiran region.

The U.S. has dramatically increased airstrikes against al-Shabab since President Donald Trump took office. Its military has carried out 22 such strikes this year, including four on Saturday that eliminated checkpoints used by al-Shabab to collect taxes to fund its violent campaign to establish an Islamic state in the long-chaotic Horn of Af-

rica nation.

The U.S. carried out nearly 50 strikes in Somalia in 2018. A small number of strikes have also targeted fighters pledging allegiance to the Islamic State group, who have been warring with al-Shabab in recent months.

Authorities and experts acknowledge it will take more than airstrikes to defeat al-Shabab, which continues to hold large parts of rural central and southern Somalia and to carry out deadly attacks in the capital, Mogadishu.

The group, which claimed the deadly attack on a luxury hotel complex in the capital of neighboring Kenya last month, was also behind the deadliest attack in Somalia's history, a massive truck bombing that killed well over 500 people in Mogadishu in October 2017.

The U.S. military is one of several security actors in Somalia, along with a multinational African Union mission and troops from Kenya and Ethiopia.

The United States says it acts in coordination with Somalia's government, whose military is expected to take over primary responsibility for the country's security over the next few years.

The African Union mission has begun a step-by-step withdrawal of forces, but some in the U.S. military and elsewhere warned that Somali forces were not yet prepared.

A United Nations panel of experts monitoring sanctions on Somalia has described the country's troops as largely poorly equipped and underpaid, conditions that cause some personnel to sell their weapons or uniforms for a little cash.



# Focus

By **MATT SEDENSKY**  
AP NATIONAL WRITER

**NEW YORK (AP)**—Immigrants with specialized skills are being denied work visas or seeing applications get caught up in lengthy bureaucratic tangles under federal changes that some consider a contradiction to President Donald Trump's promise of a continued pathway to the U.S. for the most talented foreigners.

Getting what's known as an H-1B visa has never been a sure thing — the number issued annually is capped at 85,000 and applicants need to enter a lottery to even be considered. But some immigration attorneys, as well as those who hire such workers, say they've seen unprecedented disruptions in the approval process since Trump took office in 2017.

"You see all these arguments that we want the best and the brightest coming here," said John Goslow, an immigration attorney in Ann Arbor, Michigan. "Yet we're seeing a full-frontal assault on just all aspects of immigration."

For American businesses, there is a bottom-line impact.

Link Wilson, an architect who co-founded a firm in Bloomington, Minnesota, said finding enough qualified workers within the U.S. has been a problem for years. That's due to a shortage of architects, but also because his firm needs people with experience developing senior housing. He said employers who turn to international applicants do so as a last resort, putting up with legal fees and ever-expanding visa approval times because they have no other choice.

"We're just at the point where there's no one else to hire," said Wilson, who hired an architect under an H-1B visa last year after enduring a long wait. He estimates his firm turned away about \$1 million in projects in 2018 because it didn't have enough staff to handle them.

Three months after taking office, Trump issued his "Buy American and Hire American" executive order, directing Cabinet officials to suggest reforms to ensure that H-1B visas are awarded to the "most-skilled or highest-paid" applicants to help promote the hiring of Americans for jobs that might otherwise go to immigrants.

Subsequent memos have allowed for greater discretion in denying applications without first requesting additional information from an applicant, tossed the deference given to people seeking to renew their H-1Bs, and raised concern that the government would revoke work permits for the spouses of H-1B holders. One order restricted



<sup>AP</sup>  
In this Monday, Feb. 4, 2019, photo, Leo Wang packs a suitcase at his home in San Jose, Calif. Wang has found himself trapped in an obstacle course regarding H-1B work visas for foreigners. His visa denied and his days in the United States numbered, Wang is looking for work outside the country. "I still believe in the American dream," he says. "It's just that I personally have to pursue it somewhere else."

nent residency in Canada with his wife and U.S. citizen child.

CEOs for companies including Apple, Ford and Coca-Cola penned a letter to Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen in August, saying immigration policy changes were undermining economic growth. "At a time when the number of job vacancies are reaching historic highs due to labor shortages," they said, "now is not the time to restrict access to talent."

A provision for immigration based on skills, education and employer needs dates back to the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, and the visa now known as the H-1B has until recently enjoyed wide support among politicians on both the left and the right. A Pew Research Center survey last year found broad approval for high-skilled immigrants among the public, as well, with support at 83 percent among Democrats polled and 73 percent of Republicans.

Trump has vacillated on the issue. During a March 2016 presidential debate, then-candidate Trump was asked about his opposition to visas for skilled workers, to which he said "I'm changing" and that he saw such policies as a way to keep top international students in the U.S. "We absolutely have to be able to keep the brain power in this country," he said.

His campaign followed that with a statement saying: "The H-1B program is neither high-skilled nor immigration: these are temporary foreign workers, imported from abroad, for the explicit purpose of substituting for American workers at lower pay."

Last month, Trump again reverted to a more conciliatory note, tweeting that H-1B holders "can rest assured that changes are soon coming which will bring both simplicity and certainty to your stay, including a potential path to citizenship."

Back in China now, Wang isn't sure what to make of Trump's words. He's talked to a friend from Seagate, now at a Swedish firm, about openings there, and a former boss in Singapore has some prospects for him as well.

"I still believe in the American dream," he says. "It's just that I personally have to pursue it somewhere else."

## Worker visas in doubt as Trump immigration crackdown widens

companies' ability to use H-1B workers off-site at a customer's place of business, while another temporarily rescinded the option of paying for faster application processing.

Attorneys who handle these applications say one of the biggest shifts is an increase in "requests for evidence," or RFEs, from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. An RFE can delay a visa for months or longer as applicants and employers are forced to submit additional documentation over things such as the applicability of a college degree to a prospective job or whether the wage being offered is appropriate. If the responses are unsatisfactory, a visa may be denied.

"They're just blocking the avenues so that employers will get frustrated and they won't employ foreign nationals," said Dakshini Sen, an immigration lawyer in Houston whose caseload is mostly H-1B applications. "We have to write and write and write and explain and explain and explain each and every point."

USCIS data released on Friday shows an increase in the number of completed H-1B applications receiving an RFE, from about 21 percent in the 2016 fiscal year to 38 percent last

fiscal year. The number continued to rise in the first quarter of this fiscal year, to 60 percent.

A growing number of applications with such requests were ultimately denied, while the approval rate among all applicants has fallen. Approvals also dipped in two other visa programs for foreign workers, including one for individuals with extraordinary abilities in areas such as science, sports and the arts.

Jessica Collins, a spokeswoman for USCIS, linked the changes to the president's executive order, saying the goal was to reduce "frivolous" petitions and that "it is incumbent upon the petitioner, not the government" to prove eligibility.

Some employers note traditional three-year renewable terms of H-1Bs have also been changing; one lawsuit by an organization representing information technology companies claims some visas were valid for only a few days or had expired before they were even received.

Meantime, a vague entry published in the Federal Register last fall advised that the Department of Homeland Security would propose additional revisions to focus on attracting "the best and the brightest" and to "ensure employers pay appropriate wages" to H-1B

visa holders, which has raised alarms that the administration will move to narrow the definition of who qualifies.

Caught in the crosshairs of all this are workers like Leo Wang.

Wang, 32, spent six years after college in his native China learning all he could about data and analytics. He got into the University of Southern California, interned at a major venture capital firm and wasted no time after finishing his master's before starting on another degree. He couch-surfed, passed up an enticing foreign job offer and amassed educational debt all in pursuit of the dream that ultimately came true: A six-figure Silicon Valley job.

As long as it took Wang to achieve his goal, it disappeared in record time.

Wang was working at Seagate Technology under an immigration provision known as Optional Practical Training, which gives those on student visas permission to work. But that expired last year, and because his H-1B application was in flux, he was forced to take a leave from Seagate and withdraw from the master's program he was pursuing at Berkeley. He says he and his company dutifully responded

to an RFE, compiling examples of his work at Seagate. But on Jan. 11, Wang got a final answer: He was denied an H-1B.

"All I wanted was to be able to see my American dream," he said.

Sandra Feist, an immigration attorney in Minneapolis, said talented foreigners discouraged by the visa process are beginning to look at opportunities in other countries, and she questions what that means for America's future, especially if top-tier researchers who could contribute to science and medicine are turned away.

One of her clients, a computer systems analyst from India with a master's degree from a U.S. college, filed his petition for an H-1B in April 2017 with 101 pages of documentation. He received an RFE, and a 176-page response was filed, with additional paperwork attempting to prove just how complicated the position was. He was denied. Feist filed a 282-page appeal, requesting that the file be reopened. Though the appeal was approved, there was a second RFE, which Feist said raises the same issues she already responded to.

With a U.S. work visa unlikely, that client is applying for perma-



# Good Housekeeping

Once we've move into a new space, it often feels as if what is needed is a spark of magic.

Can't one just wave a Harry Potter-type wand and place all photos on the wall in perfect harmony, or finally find that perfect couch?

Erica Feldmann, a Chicago native who runs the HausWitch Home + Healing shop in Salem, Mass., can't craft you a wand, but she does use the inspiration of magic in her new book "HausMagick: Transform Your Home With Witchcraft," which came out Feb. 12.

The book weaves together her knowledge of interior design with a personal study of "earth magic," astrology and tarot. More specifically, after dabbling in Wicca as a teenager, she pursued a degree in gender and cultural studies with research concentrated on witches. Combining her design and witch interests began when a friend who had recently moved asked her to cast a spell to find her a new house.

For those who might be less comfortable with witchcraft, she cautions her tips do not mean you need to start using crystal balls. "It means taking simple steps toward improving your quality of life and starting to see how you can shift the energy around you in your favor," she writes.

From crystals to using touch, here are tips to transform your home through what Feldmann considers a magical instruction manual for interior alchemy.

**1** Get to know your aura and the auras of others. Boundaries are important to home design. Feldmann describes an aura as "your personal electromagnetic field, and it extends two to three feet around the outside of your body." She gives steps



If aesthetic fixes aren't cutting it, think about the room.

TNS

## 5 ways to transform your home inspired by witchcraft

By ALISON BOWEN  
CHICAGO TRIBUNE

to visualize an aura — imagine a glowing light around your body — to get a feel for where and what yours is. Of course, many people live with other people, whose space also needs to be respected and reflected. Think through each person's energy. For example, with two opposite tastes in the house, consider how to balance or combine. Can you frame something from your travels — a map, a postcard

— that brings positivity to the space?

**2** Consider a crystal by your bed. If you don't know much about why crystals are sometimes in the corner of your yoga studio, Feldmann provides a good primer. She explains that they come in different sizes and forms, and are believed to have a role in healing. Beginners can bring crystals into their home by simply placing

one in a conspicuous space. But think about what it's supposed to do. For example, she suggests an amethyst on a bedside table, which could help with sleep as it should make you feel safe and supported. Or perhaps a pyrite on your desk, for willpower and manifestation. An advanced step? Creating a crystal potion.

**3** Think about what the room wants. Rooms have their own energy. A few years ago, she realized she never used a room meant to be an office. Finally, she Skyped her clairvoyant, who agreed to read the energy of the room. The room, he told her, did not want to be light, like the rest of the house, and did not want to be a productive space. It wanted to be dark, creative, meditative. She changed it from cheery yellow to a room with a black chalkboard and arts-and-crafts table. The lesson here, Feldmann says, is if a room still feels energetically off even after a bunch of aesthetic fixes, think beyond the material world. Are you using the space for activities more stressful than serene? Is there a way to stop doing



Mix textures like a cozy rug and hardwood.

TNS



TNS

Erica Feldmann is a Chicago native who runs the HausWitch Home + Healing shop in Salem, Mass.

things in a certain space, like checking work email?

**4** Use the sense of touch. In describing how to create a cozy retreat, she suggests considering what you think of as comforting. For Feldmann, what comes to mind are sweaters and flannel blankets. You can include textures like these, but also bring other, different layers of texture in your home, to help it feel lived in and comforting. Consider something like a glass piece or mirror — something smooth that can bring in calm — alongside natural textures, like hardwood floors or wood furniture. And fireplaces and candles can bring literal warmth.

**5** Clear out unwelcome intruders. Should you feel an "unwelcome intruder," whether it be Casper-like or negative energy surrounding your space, one option is to give whatever this is somewhere else to go. Choose something personal from the space and place it outside the home, Feldmann instructs. Think an old coffee mug or plant pot. She suggests saying something like, "This space is mine, and I am the boss here. I acknowledge and respect the time you have spent here, but that time is now over, and I must ask you to leave. Please use the living room window and find the space I have created for you outside my home. Go in peace."



A mix of styles, like eclectic but minimalist, can respect multiple people's energy.

TNS



## Life & Style

# R. Kelly leaves jail after posting \$100K in sex abuse case

By **DON BABWIN** and  
**MICHAEL TARM**  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

**CHICAGO** (AP)—R. Kelly walked out of a Chicago jail Monday after posting \$100,000 bail that allows him to go free while awaiting trial on charges that he sexually abused four people dating

back to 1998, including three underage girls.

Hours earlier, the R&B star pleaded not guilty to the allegations after spending the weekend behind bars. He said little during the brief arraignment, telling the judge only his name. His lawyers spoke on his behalf.

The singer-songwriter was arrested Friday on 10 counts

## Seinfeld sues California classic car dealer over '58 Porsche

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Jerry Seinfeld sued a California dealer in classic cars Monday, saying the company has left the comedian stranded in a dispute over whether a 1958 Porsche he sold is authentic.

Seinfeld sought unspecified damages in his lawsuit in Manhattan federal court from European Collectibles of Costa Mesa, California.

"Mr. Seinfeld, who is a very successful comedian, does not need to supplement his income by building and selling counterfeit sports cars," the lawsuit said.



Seinfeld

The lawsuit said Seinfeld owns one of the world's largest collections of Porsches and had never dealt with the California company before it solicited his agent to propose his purchase of the vintage vehicle.

The suit comes weeks after Seinfeld was sued by a company that says it bought the comedian's Porsche for \$1.5 million only to learn it was fake.

European Collectibles didn't immediately return a message seeking comment.

In the lawsuit, Seinfeld says he bought the car from European Collectibles for \$1.2 million in February 2013. The suit says he relied on the company's certificate of authenticity.

Seinfeld then sold the car in March 2016 to Fica Frio

Limited, based in the Channel Islands. Fica Frio, which sued Seinfeld earlier this month, wants to recover the money it spent on the sale and all costs it has incurred.

The lawsuit said that after Fica Frio sued, Seinfeld "promptly contacted" European Collectibles to demand that it resolve the dispute directly with Fica Frio.

"To date, European Collectibles has refused to do so," the lawsuit said.

The lawsuit alleged that the Seinfeld purchase was not the first time European Collectibles

was alleged to have sold a restored Porsche that was alleged by a disgruntled collector to be inauthentic.

The lawsuit said it seeks to "reveal the extent to which European Collectibles deploys fraudulent practices in connection with its restoration and sale of classic cars."

Orin Snyder, Seinfeld's lawyer, said in a statement Monday that Seinfeld relied on the certificate of authenticity when he bought the car and sold it three years later.

"Jerry has no liability in this matter, but he wants to do the right thing, and is therefore bringing this action to hold European Collectibles accountable for its own certification of authenticity, and to allow the court to determine the just outcome," he said.

## Kenneth Lonergan wins inaugural PEN/Mike Nichols award

**NEW YORK** (AP)—Filmmaker-playwright Kenneth Lonergan is the first recipient of a prize named for the late Mike Nichols.

PEN America, the literary and human rights organization, announced Monday that Lonergan has won the PEN/Mike Nichols Writing for Performance Award. The \$25,000 prize is given for works which

"enlighten and inspire audiences" in the tradition of Nichols, known for directing such films as "The Graduate" and such plays as "The Odd Couple."

Lonergan's films include "You Can Count on Me" and "Manchester By the Sea." His plays "The Waverly Gallery" and "Lobby Hero" were recently revived on Broadway.



R. Kelly walks out of Cook County Jail with his defense attorney, Steve Greenberg, after posting \$100,000 bail, Monday afternoon, Feb. 25, 2019, in Chicago.

AP

of aggravated sexual abuse. A judge set bond at \$1 million, meaning Kelly had to post 10 percent of that amount to be released. Court records show a 47-year-old woman from the Chicago suburb of Romeoville, Illinois, posted the \$100,000 bail and identified herself on the bond slip as "a friend" of Kelly, according to the Chicago Tribune.

Kelly will be forbidden from having any contact with females younger than 18.

The black van that took the entertainer away from the jail stopped in the parking lot of a large downtown McDonald's. He did not immediately emerge, but some members of his entourage stood outside the vehicle

and a dark-colored Mercedes-Benz parked next to it.

The McDonald's, a popular tourist attraction, was known as Chicago's Rock 'n' Roll McDonald's before being remodeled and losing its music theme.

The recording artist has been trailed for decades by allegations that he violated underage girls and women and held some as virtual slaves. Kelly has consistently denied any sexual misconduct, and he was acquitted of child pornography charges in 2008.

Attorney Michael Avenatti, who said he represents two Kelly accusers, said his legal team gave prosecutors a second video Monday that shows

Kelly sexually abusing a minor. Avenatti previously gave prosecutors video evidence that he said showed Kelly having sex with an underage girl.

Avenatti said the second video involves a 14-year-old girl. He said the footage from 1999 or 2000 is about 55 minutes long, but he did not say if it was the same 14-year-old girl seen in the first video he turned over to the authorities.

"The conduct in the tape can be described as nothing short of outrageous, illegal. It leaves no question as to Mr. Kelly's guilt," Avenatti said.

Avenatti said he is aware of a third tape, but he did not provide details.

Defense attorney Steve

Greenberg reiterated at a news conference that Kelly has done nothing wrong and said no one has shown him any evidence to the contrary.

"Everybody is entitled to a defense. Everybody is entitled to the presumption of innocence. We should all be taking a step back. Let's see what happens, what the evidence is and how this plays out," Greenberg said.

Details of the allegations against Kelly emerged Saturday when the prosecution released four detailed documents—one for each accuser—outlining the basis for the charges. The allegations date back as far as 1998 and span more than a decade.

## Man who made hoax call in deadly swatting seeks 20 year term

**WICHITA, Kan.** (AP)—A California man has asked for 20 years in prison as his punishment for making a hoax call that led police to fatally shoot a Kansas man following a dispute between two online gamers over \$1.50 bet in a Call of Duty WWII video game.

Tyler R. Barriss, 26, faces sentencing Friday in federal court in Wichita for making the false report resulting in a death. His attorney argued in a sentencing memorandum that Barriss never intended for anyone to get hurt and his conduct was an outgrowth of the culture within the gaming community.

As part of the plea agreement with federal prosecutors, Barriss pleaded guilty in November to a total of 51 federal charges that included some initially filed in California and the District of Columbia

related to other fake calls and threats. He seeks the shortest term allowed in that plea deal which calls for 20 to 25 years in federal prison.

Defense attorney Rich Federico portrayed his client as sincerely remorseful for calling Wichita police from Los Angeles on Dec. 28, 2017, to falsely report a shooting and kidnapping at a Wichita address. A police officer responding to the call fatally shot Andrew Finch, 28, after he opened the door. Finch, who was not playing video games, lived at the gamer's old address.

In a letter to the Finch family, Barriss wrote that he thinks every day about how his actions led to his death. He asked for forgiveness and expressed his "hope that my sentence may in some way help you feel better that justice is done,"

according to the filing.

Swatting is a form of retaliation sometimes used by gamers, who call police and make a false report to send first responders to an online opponent's address.

Barriss' defense attorney argued that the notoriety of being a known swatter within the gaming community "became an intoxicant" to him and incrementally desensitized him to real world consequences. As a young man, he spent almost all of his time indoors playing video games. His only family was his grandmother. He was homeschooled until he quit school altogether. Barriss has never had a job. At the time of his arrest he was living in a homeless shelter in Los Angeles.

"With no guidance, no structure, school, or employment, Mr. Barriss had video

games," Federico wrote. "The game Halo became his salve to social acceptance in a virtual world."

It is unclear what will become of separate Kansas charges. Barriss is scheduled for a March 4 trial in Sedgwick County District Court on state charges of involuntary manslaughter, giving a false alarm and interference with a law enforcement officer.

Also charged as co-conspirators in the federal case in Kansas in connection to the deadly swatting call are online gamers Casey Viner, 18, of North College Hill, Ohio, and Shane Gaskill, 20, of Wichita. They have pleaded not guilty to charges including conspiracy to obstruct justice, wire fraud and other counts. Their trial is scheduled for March 19 in U.S. District Court in Wichita.



By JAKE COYLE  
AP FILM WRITER

**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—An Academy Awards that sparkled with more women and African-American winners than ever before came to a screeching halt with the night's final honor. Some would even call it a "Crash."

In a twist ending that shocked many of the Dolby Theatre attendees and those watching at home, Peter Farrelly's hotly debated buddy road-trip dramedy "Green Book" triumphed at the 91st Oscars, complicating the story line on a night that had, until that moment, belonged to cultural milestones like Ryan Coogler's "Black Panther" and Alfonso Cuarón's border-breaking Netflix release, "Roma."

It's not unusual for the announcement of an Oscar winner to provoke a grimace or two. It's less ordinary to see members of the crowd leap to their feet, wave their arms in disgust and nearly stomp out of the theater.

The cameras missed it, but that was how Spike Lee responded in the Dolby Theatre. After all, Lee has seen it before. Almost exactly 30 years ago, "Driving Miss Daisy"—a movie with a similarly simplistic view of race that is often compared to "Green Book"—won best picture in the same year Lee's incendiary "Do the Right Thing" came out. Backstage, Lee joked on the win for "Green Book" that "the ref made a bad call."

"I'm snake bit. Every time somebody is driving some-

# For many, 'Green Book' win was a confounding Oscar climax



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Viggo Mortensen, left, and Mahershala Ali in a scene from "Green Book."

body, I lose!" Lee, who won his first competitive Oscar for the script to "BlacKkKlansman," told reporters, laughing. "But they changed the seating arrangement."

Lee was far from alone in his reaction. "Green Book" is the most divisive, and by some measure, most critically derided best-picture winner in more than a decade. Its win was greeted by many as a sign that Hollywood may have changed

enough to honor the second and third black female non-acting Oscar winners (as it did Sunday with costume designer Ruth E. Carter and production designer Hannah Beachler for "Black Panther"), but it hadn't progressed so far that it didn't hand the industry's top award to a movie criticized for portraying a retrograde view of race as seen through a white protagonist's eyes.

"Many of us in the black

community would like to see greater recognition for movies about the black experience and not just for movies that make the black experience comfortable for white audiences," television commentator and author Keith Boykin wrote.

Los Angeles Times film critic Justin Chang called it "the worst best picture winner since 'Crash'" and, further, "insultingly glib and huckster-

ish, a self-satisfied crock masquerading as an olive branch." According to the review-aggregation website Metacritic, not since 2004's "Crash"—another movie about race relations made primarily by white men—has there been a winner with worse reviews.

But the backlash to "Green Book"—a film about the erudite jazz pianist Don Shirley (Mahershala Ali, who won best supporting actor) and the

Bronx-native bouncer-turned-chauver Tony "Lip" Vallelonga (Viggo Mortensen)—goes much deeper than that. Though the film's fans see in Farrelly's film an often funny, feel-good odd-couple tale, critics of "Green Book" see a movie that trades on racial stereotypes and crassly capitalizes on the Green Book—a segregation-era travel guide for African Americans in the Deep South—with little interest in dramatizing its important history.

Following the win, filmmaker Ava DuVernay tweeted about the guide's creator, Victor Hugo Green, "for anyone who may interested in what the Green Book actually was."

"Green Book" was also fiercely criticized for not consulting with Shirley's family: his last living brother Maurice Shirley and niece Carol Shirley Kimble. Kimble said there was "no due diligence done to afford my family and my deceased uncle the respect of properly representing him, his legacy, his worth and the excellence in which he operated and the excellence in which he lived."

"It's once again a depiction of a white man's version of a black man's life," Kimble told Shadow and Act.

It was noted, too, that in neither acceptance speech did the film's makers—Farrelly, Nick Vallelonga and Brian Currie, who together also won best screenplay—thank Shirley. Asked about that backstage at the Oscars, Vallelonga, the son of Tony Vallelonga, added his thanks to the pianist and addressed Kimble's point.

## Backstage at the Oscars: Sing-a-longs and Champagne for Gaga

**LOS ANGELES (AP)**—Right off-stage from where the Oscars are handed out, there's a whole mini-show happening in the wings with a cast of busy production people, anxious stars and dazed winners circulating in and out of the tight space. The Associated Press got a front seat to the action, where "Aquaman" star Jason Momoa could be seen giving a bear hug to "Free Solo" director Jimmy Chin, Lady Gaga asked, "Did I nail it?" after her show-stopping "Shallow" performance and "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse" producer Amy Pascal looked at her Oscar and proclaimed, "It's so cute!"

Here are some highlights that didn't make the broadcast of the 91st Academy Awards.

### BUT WHERE'S MY DRINK?

Winners are often quite shell-shocked walking off the main stage of the Dolby Theatre and into the wings where they're immediately photographed and asked to do a reaction video, but some quickly decide

on what they want: A drink.

Lady Gaga, still wiping away tears from her emotional win for best song, came backstage and asked, "Is there champagne?" By the time she'd made it to the main hallway, a flute had found its way into her hands, but she hoped that photographers wouldn't capture her downing it. Others had friends to help, and best actress winner Olivia Colman had two: Sam Rockwell and Frances McDormand.

"White wine for this woman, white wine," McDormand said as soon as they got off-stage.

Rockwell chimed in: "She needs a white wine."

And sometimes, you don't even need to have won to get one. Sarah Paulson told her co-presenter Paul Rudd they were going to get cocktails—after they'd finished their job of course.

### CAPTAIN AMERICA MEETS AQUAMAN

Chris Evans had moments with more than a few people backstage as one of the early presenters, many of which

came in line for the restroom of all places. One such encounter was when comic book imprint rival Jason Momoa, aka DC's "Aquaman," came backstage. "Captain America" kept things civil as the two exchanged "hey mans." Later, a woman came through saying, "I have somebody who needs to be in the theater" who hoped to skip the line. That somebody was best supporting actress nominee Rachel Weisz. "Oh, just somebody," Evans joked, while letting Weisz cut to the front of the line. Steve Rogers would be proud.

### EVERYONE WHO'S ANYONE HAD A COMFORTABLE SHOE OPTION

The Oscars can be a long night for women in uncomfortable footwear, so Jennifer Hudson and Bette Midler came prepared. Hudson, who performed the nominated song "I'll Fight," wore slippers with royal blue feathers before putting on her lacy high heels for her moment on stage. And Midler had on a pair of black boots and socks,

as well as a corduroy jacket, that were switched out for a pair of metallic platforms to sing "Where the Lost Things Go." But there was one woman who stayed in the comfy footwear all night: last year's best actress winner Frances McDormand rocked a pair of bright yellow Birkenstock sandals.

### A BACKSTAGE SING-ALONG

Sure, everyone who tuned in for the Oscars probably caught the opening number at the very least, but right off-stage, Amy Poehler, Tina Fey and Maya Rudolph all had their own private sing-and-dance-along to the performance. They bobbed their heads along to "We Will Rock You," but really got into it for "We Are the Champions," before taking the stage to present the best supporting actress trophy to Regina King. Not even "Shallow" got such a karaoke reception—but perhaps it was because everyone, KiKi Layne included, was too rapt with Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper's performance.

### EVEN THE PRESENTERS ARE NERVOUS

"I'm so nervous," said Awkwafina as she made her way to stage to present the sound editing and mixing awards with John Mulaney. Thankfully her bit was all about being nervous, so it wasn't exactly a bad thing to actually be feeling that way. Others get ribbed. Guillermo del Toro laughed and greeted Allison Janney, who had just walked off stage, telling her, "You didn't (expletive) it up!" And some treat themselves to a snack. Jennifer Lopez grabbed a small plate of cheese and crackers after presenting. "You deserve it," said Evans.

### BRIE LARSON OFFERS OSCARS ADVICE

Brie Larson seemed a little hesitant to join in on Spike Lee's adapted screenplay win moment. She presented the award to him with Samuel L. Jackson, who Lee called to join in on a photo backstage. Larson demurred. "No, no, I'm in the back," she said as Jackson tried to pull her up

to the front of the photo with a beaming Lee, still clutching his speech in one hand and his Oscar in another.

"Major," Larson said, as they all posed.

As they walked out, Larson gave co-writers David Rabinowitz and Charlie Wachtel a piece of advice about winning an Oscar.

"Enjoy the moment," she said. "It won't make sense for a long time."

Larson won her best actress trophy for "Room" in 2016.

### AMY ADAMS IS A SUPPORTIVE CO-STAR

Late into the show, Amy Adams dashed out of the green room, champagne in hand. Her husband Darren Le Gallo chased after her with her purse. "You forgot this," he said. But Adams had more important things to think about, like where she was going to stash the champagne. "I want to be back there for this," she said. The best actor category was quickly approaching and her "Vice" co-star Christian Bale was a nominee.



# Nielsen: 29.6 million viewers for Oscars, up from 2018

**NEW YORK** (AP)—The Oscars ended its four-year streak of dwindling viewership, reaching 29.6 million on Sunday to beat last year's

audience by 12 percent, but it still represents the second-smallest audience in the award show's history.

The 2018 show had reached

## 2 arrested in robbery of California news crew

**OAKLAND, Calif.** (AP)—Two men have been arrested in the shooting of the security guard for a news crew that was robbed while covering the Oakland teachers' strike, authorities said Monday.

KPIX said a reporter and a photographer were gathering interviews Sunday afternoon at the Oakland Library when a car pulled up and two men got out and of them pointed a gun and demanded their camera. The crew surrendered the equipment and began walking away.

One of the suspects then shot the guard, Matt Meredith, in the leg, the news station said. KPIX reporter Joe Vazquez said on Twitter that the guard, a retired Berkeley police officer, returned gunfire.

Alameda County Sheriff spokesman Sgt. Ray Kelly said a 21-year-old man with several gunshot wounds went to a hospital after the incident. Oakland police arrested the man on suspicion of shooting the guard.

Oakland Police spokeswoman Johanna Watson con-

firmed Monday two people were detained and the stolen camera was recovered. The guard was treated at a hospital and released, she said.

Assaults on routine assignments became so commonplace in recent years that some television stations have hired armed guards to ride with news crews.

It's not the first time the station has been the target of theft. In November 2012, a group of men punched a KPIX cameraman while he was filming in front of an Oakland high school and fled with his camera while it was still recording.

The Associated Press tallied five robberies in 2012, two in 2013, three in 2014 and at least three in 2015 plus several burglaries of news vehicles.

"We don't know what the market is for these cameras," San Francisco Police Sgt. Michael Andraychuk told The Associated Press in 2015. Even though the cameras can cost upward of \$50,000 each, it is specialized equipment that can't be easily sold on the black market, Andraychuk said.

only 26.5 million viewers, a figure that set off alarm bells at ABC and the motion picture academy.

This year's show featured movies with more box office juice than in the recent past. It provided a water-cooler controversy over the merits of best picture winner "Green Book," and some memorable musical performances by Queen and the duo of Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper.

It also went without a host after Kevin Hart backed off, although the trio of Tina Fey, Amy Poehler and Maya Rudolph offered what was essentially an opening monologue.

The Oscars is generally the most-watched entertainment program of the year, often only second to the Super Bowl. Yet its viewership had declined steadily since hitting 43.7 million in 2014, the Nielsen company said.

Despite this year's rebound, it still represents only the second time since Nielsen has been measuring that viewership slipped under 30 million people.

The biggest Oscars audience ever recorded came in 1998, when 55.2 million people turned out to see "Titanic" named best picture.

ABC also said Monday that its preview of the drama "Whiskey Cavalier" was seen by 4.2 million people after the Oscars ended.

## France: Lack of evidence for rape claim against Luc Besson

**PARIS** (AP)—The Paris prosecutor's office says an investigation failed to turn up evidence to support a woman's rape allegation against filmmaker Luc Besson and the case has been dropped.

The woman filed a complaint in May 2018 accusing the 59-year-old director of drugging and raping her at Le Bristol Paris hotel.

The prosecutor's office said Monday that investigators

didn't find evidence of a rape.

The law firm that represents Besson said the filmmaker was satisfied with the prosecutor's decision and noted he always denied the woman's allegation.

Besson has produced nearly 100 films and written and directed many of them. His films include the "Taken" series, "Subway," "The Fifth Element," "The Big Blue," and "Leon."

## Ukraine blocks Eurovision nominee in politically-tinged spat

**MOSCOW** (AP)—Ukraine's public broadcaster on Monday refused to sign a contract with the performer who won the right to represent her country in the Eurovision contest—a move that follows a politically-tinged argument rooted in the nation's tug-of-war with Russia.

Controversy erupted immediately after 27-year-old singer Anna Korsun who performs under the name of Maruv won the national finals Sunday to be Ukraine's entry in the annual competition.

Several Ukrainian politicians argued Maruv should



AP  
In this photo taken on Sunday, Feb. 24, 2019, Anna Korsun, who performs under the name of Maruv, center, on stage at the national nomination for Eurovision in Kiev, Ukraine.

not be allowed to represent Ukraine at the contest in May in Tel Aviv, Israel, because she often performs in Russia. Her tours in Russia have become a toxic issue because of the tug-of-war between the two neighbors following Russia's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimean peninsula and support for separatist insurgents in Ukraine's east.

The Ukrainian National Public Broadcaster promptly offered Maruv a contract that temporarily bars her from performing in Russia among other conditions, saying that she has 24 hours to sign it. After the talks that lasted for most of the day Monday, the singer and the broadcaster said they failed to reach agreement.

Maruv said on Facebook that she was ready to cancel shows in Russia but couldn't accept other stipulations of the contract that she said would amount to "censorship" and force her to engage in political propaganda.

## Ariana Grande to play Manchester, 2 years after arena bomb

**LONDON** (AP)—Ariana Grande is returning to Manchester, two years after a suicide bomber killed 22 people at her concert in the northwest England city.

Organizers say Grande will be a headliner at the Manchester Pride Live event on Aug. 25. Chief executive

Mark Fletcher said Monday that "we're truly honored to be welcoming Ariana back to the city to help us celebrate LGBT+ life."

Grande and Manchester were bound together in tragedy on May 22, 2017, when a bomber blew himself up at Manchester Arena

as fans were leaving her show. The singer returned to the city two weeks later to take part in a memorial concert, which she helped to organize.

Manchester authorities named Grande an honorary citizen of the city for her work in the wake of the attack.

## Plans for retirement stall after affair is discovered

**DEAR ABBY:** I just found out that my husband of 37 years is having an affair. I have supported him in every way I could—raising our daughters, taking care of the household and holding a full-time job while he traveled for business and his many hobbies.

We both work hard and have developed a good life. We have been discussing retirement and maybe a move to another area. In recent years he has become evasive and has improved his appearance noticeably.

While it's true that I fell out of love with him several years ago because of his selfishness and lack of respect for me, we have still been good partners and parents and enjoyed doing things together. I do not like him spending our money on another woman and don't want this to get back to the children as it will really, really hurt them.

Should I continue to pretend I don't know, or do I confront him? I doubt he would end the affair completely even if he knows it has been found out. And yes, there are a lot of assets involved if this comes to divorce.

KNOWS THE SECRET

**DEAR KNOWS:** What a sad story. You say you fell out of love with your husband several years ago. Is it possible that he sensed it?

Because there are "a lot of assets" involved, consult an

**attorney about what your spousal rights are in the event that a continued partnership is not what your husband wants for the rest of his life. Then tell him you know what has been going on and offer him the option of marriage counseling so the two of you can repair your marriage. His reaction will tell you what you need to do next.**

**DEAR ABBY:** My mom and I had a very close relationship until two years ago when I found out she was hanging out with my ex-husband. This man ruined me financially with his gambling habit, and Mom was first in line telling me to divorce him. From day one she never liked him. My ex went on to make my life a living hell for many years by not paying child support or spending time with our three kids.

All these years later, they now go to the casino together, and she's got him going to her church. I feel hurt and angry. She sings his praises—"he's a changed man!" I had to finally stop my daily calls and the many texts we shared all day long because, even after I told her how much this behavior hurt me, she told me she was sorry I felt that way. She claims there is nothing to their relationship except friendship. How do I get past feeling replaced and disrespected?

MISERABLE IN MINNESOTA

**DEAR MISERABLE:** Your mother may consider your ex to

## DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN  
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at [www.DearAbby.com](http://www.DearAbby.com) or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



**be "changed," but I have to question how much someone with a gambling problem has changed if he is accompanying her to a casino. She must be desperate for company to befriend someone who treated her daughter—and grandchildren—so badly.**

**The way to get past feeling replaced and disrespected is to get on with your own life and spend as little time as possible looking back. Your mother has made her choice, and she isn't going to change. Now it's up to you to find things to fill the void she left.**

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$16 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)







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# Dodgers meet with Harper, still no decision yet



**GLENDAL, Ariz. (AP)** —

Bryce Harper met with the Los Angeles Dodgers over the weekend, a sign the market for the star free agent might be picking up as spring training enters its second full week.

Dodgers manager Dave Roberts confirmed the Sunday night meeting, saying it was “good.”

“Just trying to get to know each other,” Roberts said Monday. “In the spirit of us, as the Dodgers, vetting a certain process makes sense, and for those guys to do their due diligence as well.”

Roberts declined to comment about possible terms for a contract with Harper, saying “I personally have to focus on the 61 guys that are here.”

Harper has been connected to the Philadelphia Phillies and the San Francisco Giants during a second consecutive slow free-agent market for the sport. Manny Machado, the other top free agent this winter, signed a \$300 million, 10-year deal with the San Diego Padres on Thursday.

The 26-year-old Harper was the 2015 NL MVP and made six All-Star teams in seven big league seasons with the Washington Nationals. He batted .249 with 34 home runs, 100 RBIs and an .889 OPS last year.

A Harper signing could displace projected starting left fielder Joc Pederson, who has been the subject of trade rumors throughout the offseason. Pederson said last week he was affected by the winter chatter, and he struck out twice and made an error Monday in an 11-2 spring training win over the Cubs amid reports of the meeting with Harper.

“With Joc, I am not concerned,” Roberts said. “In baseball, there’s always speculation. He understands that. He’s a professional, so I don’t think that affected him today.”

Pederson said he expects the Dodgers “to do whatever it is that is going to help them win” and that “right now, I am part of that and that’s all I can control.”

## Hicks, Yankees agree to \$70M, 7-year deal

In Florida, making another move to keep their core of players together, the New York Yankees agreed to a \$70 million, seven-year contract with outfielder Aaron Hicks.

Hicks’ agreement adds \$64 million in guaranteed money over six seasons and club option for 2026 that could make it worth \$81.5 million over eight seasons.

“This is the organization I want to stay with,” Hicks said during a news conference



Washington Nationals’ Bryce Harper celebrates his two-run home run in the dugout during the seventh inning of the second baseball game of a double-header against the Chicago Cubs, Saturday, Sept. 8, 2018, in Washington.

“The last few years because of our efforts to get under the luxury tax and reset that clock prevented us from having any conversions like this with anybody because it was prohibitive,” Cashman said. “Since we reset the clock, now we’re in a position to be opened minded and try to work through opportunities that may exist.”

New York has not given many multiyear contracts to players under its control in recent years, but the Yankees gave right-hander Luis Severino a \$40 million, four-year deal on Feb. 15.

Shortstop Didi Gregorius and reliever Dellin Betances remain eligible for free agency after this season. In addition, right fielder Aaron Judge and catcher Gary Sanchez become eligible for salary arbitration next winter.

Hicks received just the fourth multiyear contract this offseason among more than 175 players eligible for arbitration after Severino, Philadelphia pitcher Aaron Nola (\$45 million for four years) and Minnesota right fielder Max Kepler (\$35 million for five years).

## Ramirez signs with Indians

Free agent first baseman Hanley Ramirez has agreed to sign a minor league contract with the Cleveland Indians.

Ramirez, a former National League Rookie of the Year, will sign with the three-time defending AL Central champions and join them in camp once he passes a physical.

The Athletic was first to report the deal.

Ramirez, 35, played in just 44 games last season with Boston before he was released in May. He hit .254 with six home runs and 29 RBI for the Red Sox, and did not sign with another team.

“Good for him,” Red Sox manager Alex Cora said Sunday. “He’s an everyday player. If he gets at-bats he might be able to produce. He’s still young enough.”

A three-time All-Star, Ramirez is a .290 career hitter with 296 career home runs. He might be able to bring some pop to Cleveland’s lineup, which needs some power following the trades of slugger Edwin Encarnacion and first baseman Yonder Alonso and after outfielder Michael Brant-

## Red Sox’s Martinez: Offseason has been ‘embarrassing for baseball’

Red Sox designated hitter J.D. Martinez sounded off on the state of baseball last week, saying in an interview with WEEI Boston that this MLB offseason has been “embarrassing for baseball.”

Major League Baseball appears to be heading toward something lately, with more and more ballplayers feeling the need to speak out about an offseason which saw top free agents Manny Machado and Bryce Harper go un-signed for quite some time. (Machado eventually agreed to a 10-year, \$300 million deal with the San Diego Padres. Harper remains unsigned.)

Martinez undoubtedly has opinions on the matter after his own free agency, which saw him dangle for months before finally agreeing to a 5-year, \$110 million deal with the Red Sox that many thought was below market value. Martinez promptly hit 43 HR, .330 AVG and 1.031 OPS for the Red Sox and led them to a World Series title.

On the radio show, Martinez was asked if he thought free agents would go undervalued for the second season in a row.

Via CBS Sports: “One-hundred percent. I knew it was,” he said. “Why wouldn’t

it? They got away with it last year, why wouldn’t they do it again? What’s going to happen? Nothing.”

He continued:

“It’s embarrassing for baseball, it really is. It’s really embarrassing for the game. You have a business. They say, ‘The market is down, the market is changing.’ The market is higher than it’s ever been. People are making more money than ever, and they’re trying to suppress it.

“It’s more of a race towards the bottom now than a race towards the top. You can go right now through everyone’s lineup and you al-

ready know who’s going to be in the playoffs. What’s the fun in that? We might as well just fast-forward to the end of the season.”

Martinez went on, explaining that we’re in a situation now in which “80 percent of the teams [are] trying to lose” and spoke a bit ominously about needing to go back to the drawing board for a CBA negotiation.

“There’s nothing we can do now. It’s going to be like this for the next three years. But it’s what they wanted. We’ve got to make sure we have our ducks aligned for 2021. I think the public knows.”

Monday. “The team here is a team that I want to be with. I think it has a bright future.”

A 29-year-old switch-hitter, Hicks took over as the Yankees primary center fielder last year and set career highs with 137 games, 27 homers and 79 RBIs. He agreed on Jan. 11 to a \$6 million, one-year contract and would have been eligible for free agency after this season.

“I’m thrilled,” Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. “He’s just really an elite level player.”

His new, superseding deal calls for a \$2 million signing bonus and keeps the \$6 million salary this year. He gets

\$10.5 million annually from 2020-23 and \$9.5 million in each of the following two seasons. The Yankees have a \$12.5 million option for 2026 with a \$1 million buyout.

Hicks would get a \$1 million assignment bonus the first time he is traded. He receives a hotel suite on road trips.

“There was a lot of people questioning if he’d ever cross into being the player that his draft card said he was capable of being,” Yankees general manager Brian Cashman said. “He was hungry to prove otherwise and we were hungry to work with him on it.”

Acquired from Minnesota

in November 2015, Hicks has been on the disabled list in all six of his big league seasons, nine trips in all for hamstring strains (three times), oblique strains (twice), shoulder, forearm and intercostal strains, and a concussion.

With a \$4 million increase in Hicks’ average annual value this year, New York’s raised its projected luxury tax payroll to about \$229 million, well above the \$206 million threshold and past the first surtax level. The Yankees would pay a 20 percent tax on the first \$20 million above the threshold and at a 32 percent rate on the next \$20 million.

“Those are real dollars that have taxable consequences because we’re already in a tax threshold, but it’s an example of an owner trying to walk that line of the present and the future,” Cashman said. “We’re lucky that ownership is directing their blessings on a lot of things.”

New York didn’t pay luxury tax in 2018, the first time the Yankees were under the threshold since the tax started in 2003. By falling under, the Yankees reset their tax rates, which had been 50 percent on the first \$20 million over and 62 percent on the next \$20 million.



# Federer begins bid for 100th title with win

**DUBAI, United Arab Emirates** (AP)—Roger Federer's latest attempt to win his 100th ATP singles title made a shaky start at the Dubai Championships where he overcame Philipp Kohlschreiber 6-4, 3-6, 6-1 on Monday.

Federer entered the first-round match with a 13-0 record against the German, and broke in the first game to run through the first set.

But Kohlschreiber forced a third set between them for only the third time. In that set, Federer forced an error to break for 2-0 and held, and cruised home.

"(My thinking was to) just somehow get through. Somehow try not to lose," Federer said. "I'm very pleased I was able to find a way. I actually played a really good third set, I thought."

Federer won his 99th tour title in October in Basel, and his bid for the 100th has ended so far in two semifinals, then the fourth round of the Australian Open.

Next up for him is Fernando Verdasco, the 2017 Dubai runner-up to Andy Murray. Verdasco beat Italian qualifier Thomas Fabbiano 3-6, 6-3, 6-2.

The two other seeds in action beside Federer lost.

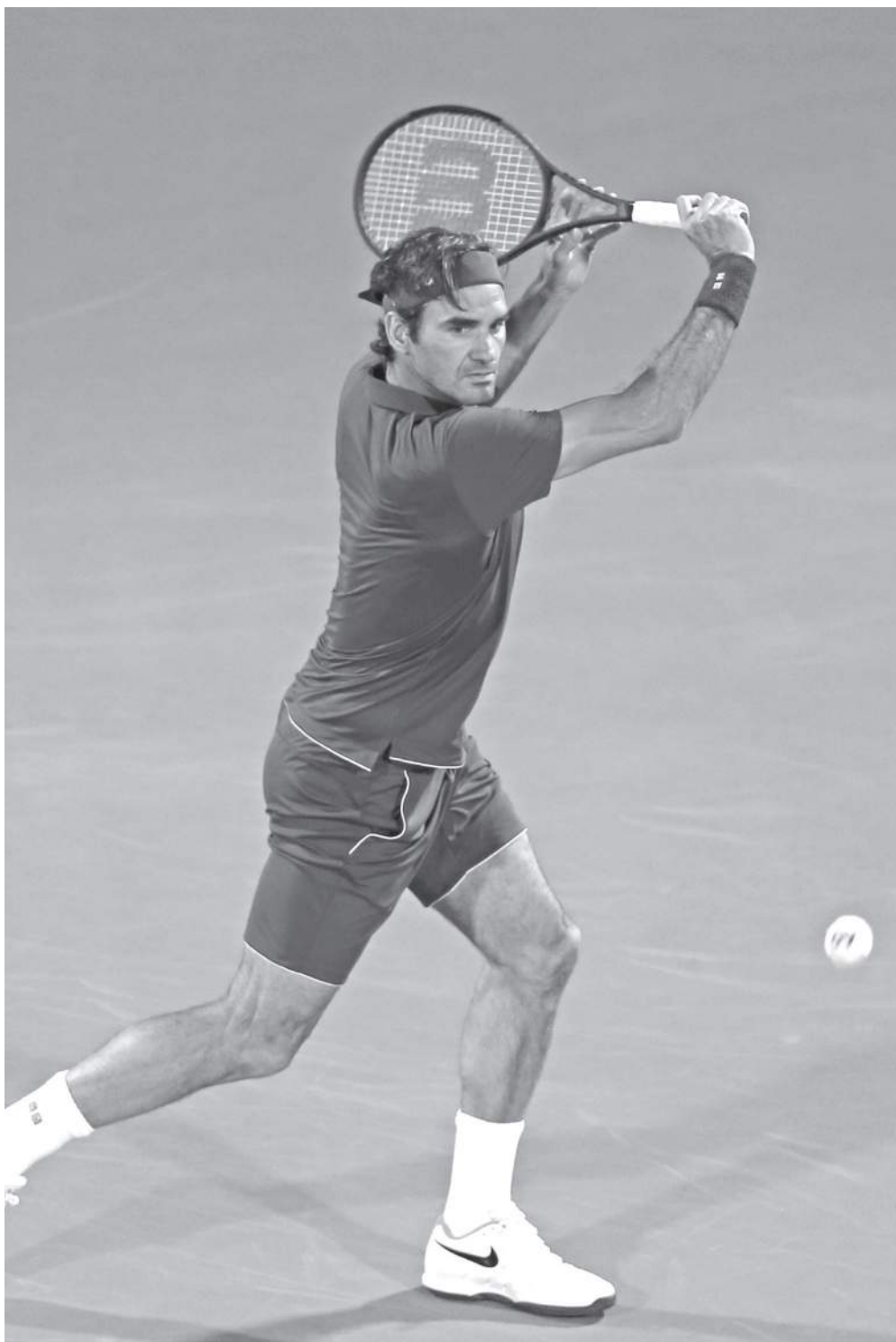
Nikoloz Basilashvili, the highest-ranked Georgian in ATP history at No. 19, upset fourth-seeded Karen Khachanov of Russia 6-4, 6-1, and Jan-Lennard Struff of Germany spoiled seventh-seeded Milos Raonic's Dubai debut 6-4, 5-7, 6-4.

Basilashvili will play for a spot in the quarterfinals against defending champion Roberto Bautista Agut of Spain, who beat Indian wild card Ramkumar Ramanathan 6-4, 6-3.

## Serena cartoon was 'non-racist caricature'

Meanwhile, in Sydney, the Australian Press Council has ruled there was no breach of its standards of practice in a cartoon of tennis star Serena Williams which attracted global condemnation after being published by Melbourne's Herald Sun newspaper last September.

The depiction of Williams by cartoonist Mark Knight showed the 23-time major winner reacting angrily during her loss to Naomi Osaka in the final of the U.S. Open. Williams is depicted with her mouth open wide, hands in fists and jumping above a broken tennis racket and a baby's pacifier. The umpire was shown telling a blond, slender woman—meant to be Osaka, who has a Japanese mother and a father from Haiti—



"Can you just let her win?"

In a ruling published Monday, the Australian Press

Council said it "acknowledged that some readers found the cartoon offensive" but said

there was sufficient public interest in commenting on the behavior of a player with a

Roger Federer of Switzerland returns the ball to Philipp Kohlschreiber of Germany during their match at the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championship, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Monday, Feb. 25, 2019.

globally high profile.

Critics of Knight's cartoon described it as a clear example of a stereotype facing black women, depicting Williams as an irate, hulking, big-mouthed black woman jumping up and down.

The press council said it had received complaints from people who believed the cartoon was racist and sexist.

"Specifically, concern was expressed that the cartoon depicted Ms. Williams with large lips, a broad flat nose, a wild afro-styled ponytail hairstyle different to that worn by Ms. Williams during the match and positioned in an ape-like pose," the council said in a statement. "The council considered that the cartoon uses exaggeration and absurdity to make its point but accepts the publisher's claim that it does not depict Ms Williams as an ape, rather showing her as 'spitting the dummy,' a non-racist caricature familiar to most Australian readers."

Spitting the dummy is an Australian term for a tantrum.

The Washington Post criticized the cartoon at the time of its publication as reflective of the "dehumanizing Jim Crow caricatures so common in the 19th and 20th centuries."

The Herald Sun said the cartoon used "satire, caricature, exaggeration, and hu-

mor" to depict an event of public interest.

Knight told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation on Monday he was "very happy" with the council's ruling.

"I will not be changing the way I draw cartoons because I think I'm a very free and fair cartoonist and I accept issues on their merits and draw them as such," he said.

The press council said it accepted the newspaper's contention

the cartoon was in response to Williams' behavior during the match.

The newspaper "said that the cartoon was not intended to depict negatively any race or gender and was drawn in a style that the cartoonist has drawn over several decades and was only intended to be a 'sporting cartoon' for the publication's local readership," the press council said in its findings.

During the final against Osaka, Williams got a warning from the chair umpire for receiving coaching from the sidelines. An indignant Williams emphatically defended herself, denying she had cheated. A short time later, she smashed her racket in frustration and was docked a point. She protested and demanded an apology from the umpire, who penalized her a game.

Williams has won the Australian Open seven times and is a crowd favorite at Melbourne Park, where she has been playing at the season's first tennis major since 1998. She returned for the tournament last month but lost in the quarterfinals.

## Italy, China, and Scotland hand men World Cup lesson

**SWITZERLAND**—They missed out on the men's World Cup in Russia last year, but the good news for fans in countries from Italy to China and Scotland is that they will be present at the women's tournament in France in June and July.

In football-mad Italy, who hadn't missed the men's tournament since 1958, the presence of the "Azzurre" should be great news. For the women, it is a first World Cup appearance since 1999. But not everyone seems so impressed.

"Ah girls, go and play at the World Cup, but do not talk tactics," wrote Inter Milan captain Regina Baresi—daughter and niece of two great Italian players, Giuseppe and Franco—in a recent tweet.

It was a sarcastic reference to controversial comments by Fulvio Collovati, a member of Italy's 1982 World Cup-winning

side and now a pundit with state broadcaster RAI.

"When I hear a woman speak about tactics it turns my stomach," he said, adding that "a woman doesn't understand like a man." He was suspended by the channel as a result.

The Italy women's team coach, Milena Bertolini, said this year's World Cup was "an important opportunity" for the game's development in the country.

"It can help little girls, as well as all Italians, understand how normal it is for girls to play football," she remarked.

There are only around 23,000 registered female players in Italy, compared to over 200,000 in Germany and over 100,000 in England.

Italy's achievement in qualifying therefore deserves to be hailed, especially coming so soon after the men's

failure to do so.

"Of course, we benefited from that, in terms of media interest," said Bertolini.

"I am sorry that the boys were not at the World Cup. It was a defeat for all Italian football, but the girls probably drew extra strength and motivation by being able to say 'look, we are here, we have done something great.'"

Scotland have also achieved something great, qualifying for the women's World Cup for the first time, just two years after making it to a debut European Championship.

There is a certain sense of destiny with Scotland featuring at a World Cup on French soil—the men's team have not been back to a major tournament since the 1998 tournament in France.

Former Aberdeen and



Borussia Dortmund striker Scott Booth was part of Scotland's squad then, and is now coach of Glasgow City, the dominant women's club in the country who have won the last 12 domestic titles.

In a nation where infrastructure is often poor and clubs are cash-strapped in the men's game, it is not easy for the women. But things are improving, with leading men's clubs like Celtic investing more and more in women's teams.

"That has been fundamental, because in terms of media interest, people now talk about women's football," says Bertolini. "It existed before, but nobody talked about it."

"There are more resources, and young Italian girls can play in a professional environment and develop their talent."

Meanwhile, The question is different in China, where the women—World Cup runners-up in 1999—have always performed far better than the men.

Despite that, interest in them is limited, much to the frustration of Wang Shuang, the Asian women's player of the year.

Wang, of Paris Saint-Germain, posted on China's popular Weibo social media platform calling for more Chinese support for the country's female footballers.

"The Chinese women's football team needs true backing, not just lip service," said Tencent Sports in support of Wang.

It is a big issue in Italy too, and Bertolini knows the stakes.

"If we play well and win, get to the last 16, I think that will provide an impetus and lots of girls will want to get involved."



# Conley, Grizzlies dent Lakers' playoff hopes



**MEMPHIS, Tenn.** (AP)—The Lakers got a triple-double from LeBron James and 32 points from Brandon Ingram but still suffered another dent to their playoff hopes.

Mike Conley had 30 points including key free throws in the final minute, Jonas Valanciunas finished with 20 points and 13 rebounds, and the Memphis Grizzlies beat Los Angeles 110-105 on Monday night.

The loss to the Grizzlies, in next-to-last place in the West, came two days after the Lakers lost 128-115 to the Pelicans in New Orleans. That game had James wondering if his teammates' lack of experience in the playoff hunt had them prepared for the pressure and grind of trying to reach the postseason.

This time, James, who finished with 24 points, 12 rebounds and 11 assists, couched his comments with optimism, saying it is up to him and his teammates to continue their push.

"Just to stay positive and keep knocking on the door," James said when asked about improving through the final stretch of the regular season. "I feel like if we play like we did (Monday), then we've got to continue that consistent effort to get us over this hump while we make this push."

## Rockets 119, Hawks 111

In Houston, James Harden scored 28 points, ending his 32-game streak with at least 30, and the Rockets beat the Atlanta Hawks.

Houston overcame a career-high eight 3-pointers from



AP  
Los Angeles Lakers forward LeBron James (23) shoots between Memphis Grizzlies center Jonas Valanciunas (17) and forward Bruno Caboclo (5) in the second half of an NBA basketball game Monday, Feb. 25, 2019, in Memphis, Tenn.

Hawks rookie Trae Young, who put up 36 points.

Harden returned after missing Saturday's win over Golden State with a neck injury. His run of games with 30 or more points was the second-longest in NBA history behind a 65-game streak by Wilt Chamberlain.

## Suns 124, Heat 121

In Miami, Devin Booker scored 20 points to lead seven Phoenix players in double figures, and the Suns snapped a club-record 17-game losing

streak by beating the Heat in Miami.

Former Heat guard Tyler Johnson scored 18 points for Phoenix. Jamal Crawford and Kelly Oubre Jr. each had 16 and were huge down the stretch for Phoenix, which scored 40 points in the fourth quarter. Deandre Ayton and Troy Daniels each had 14, and Josh Jackson scored 11 for the Suns.

## Bucks 117, Bulls 106

In Chicago, Khris Middleton and Malcolm Brogdon scored 22 points apiece, and NBA-

leading Milwaukee beat the Bulls with All-Star Giannis Antetokounmpo sidelined with a sore right knee.

The Bucks overcame a sluggish start to pick up their 17th win in 19 games.

The Bucks picked up their eighth straight road win—their best streak since a nine-game run during the 1981-82 season.

## Timberwolves 112, Kings 105

In Minneapolis, Karl-Anthony Towns had 34 points and 21 rebounds in his return from the

concussion protocol, helping Minnesota hold off Sacramento

Derrick Rose added 20 points and Tyus Jones pitched in 16 points, eight assists and three steals for the Timberwolves, who split the previous two games without Towns, while he recovered following a highway crash last week involving the car he was riding in. The accident ended Towns' streak of 302 consecutive starts to begin his NBA career.

## 76ers 111, Pelicans 110

In New Orleans, Tobias Harris scored 29 points, Ben Simmons had 14 points and 12 assists, and Philadelphia narrowly held off the Pelicans

Sixers 7-foot-3 reserve Boban Marjanovic had 12 points, 10 rebound and two blocks in less than 22 minutes to help fill the void in the middle created by the absence of 7-foot All-Star Joel Embiid, who has missed all three of Philadelphia's games since the All-Star break.

## Warriors, Hornets 110

In Charlotte, Klay Thompson scored 26 points, DeMarcus Cousins had 24 points and 11 rebounds, and visiting Golden State dealt the Hornets their second straight loss.

The Warriors took a 1 1/2-game lead over the Denver Nuggets in the race for the best record in the Western Conference. Golden State dropped its previous game, a home loss against Houston on Saturday night.

Kevin Durant had 20 points and seven rebounds for the Warriors, who have not lost back-to-

back games since Dec. 27.

## Nets 101, Spurs 85

In New York, D'Angelo Russell had 23 points, eight assists and seven rebounds, and Brooklyn forced visiting San Antonio into perhaps its worst offensive performance of the season.

A night after their defense was absent in a loss to the Knicks, the Spurs couldn't get their offense going. San Antonio was held to its lowest point total of the season, and the NBA's leading 3-point shooting team at 40 percent was a season-worst 16.7 percent behind the arc.

## Pistons 113, Pacers 109

In Detroit, Andre Drummond had 26 points and 16 rebounds, Blake Griffin had a triple-double and resurgent Pistons won for the seventh time in eight games.

Griffin had 20 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists for Detroit, which is battling for a playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

## Trail Blazers 123, Cavaliers 110

In Cleveland, CJ McCollum scored 35 points and visiting Portland hung on after nearly squandering a 23-point half-time lead.

The Blazers needed a 14-0 run late in the fourth quarter to put the game away.

Cleveland cut the lead to 88-84 going into the fourth and was behind 105-102 with 4:42 left, but Portland's backcourt duo of McCollum and Damian Lillard took over from there.

## Column: LeBron 'killed' Lakers' chemistry during Davis trade talks

When looking at the Los Angeles Lakers' recent struggles, many aren't quick to blame LeBron James.

It's hard to blame the 15-time All-Star, who is one of the best to ever play the game, when he's averaged nearly 29 points, 8.7 rebounds and 7.7 assists per game, after all.

According to one NBA executive, however, James is absolutely at fault for ruining the chemistry among the team—specifically with how he handled himself while the Lakers were attempting to land Anthony Davis before the trade deadline earlier this month.

"He killed the (Lakers') chemistry," an NBA executive told Bleacher Report. "He shouldn't have been so public about it. Even during the All-Star draft, he laughed about (wanting Davis to be his teammate)."

James and the Lakers were

extremely public throughout the attempt to land the Pelicans superstar—something not generally seen in the NBA. It appeared to negatively impact the locker room on multiple occasions, too, something that cumulated with an "emotional exchange" between multiple veterans on the team and coach Luke Walton.

It's easy to see how, with James and the front office being so open about wanting Davis, that others on the team could get frustrated and think that James doesn't want to play with them.

The Lakers now hold a 29-30 record, marking the first time since a James-led team has fallen below .500 at this point in the year since the 2004-05 season—which was also the last time he failed to make the postseason. The Lakers are on the verge of missing

out on the playoffs this year, as they sit in 10th in the Western Conference standings

He was brutally honest after the Lakers' most-recent loss, too—a 128-115 loss to the Pelicans, who were playing without Davis. James implied that many on his team were accustomed to losing, and that they didn't always arrive with the right mental and physical preparation needed.

"It's how you approach the game every day," James said on Saturday. "It's how you think the game every day, it's how you play the game, it's how you prepare for the game, and that's not even like, when you get to the arena. That's like way before that."

"Basketball: If that's not the most important thing, then why we doing this?"

Now, there are a lot of factors as to why the Lakers have struggled. They've had to deal

with a multitude of injuries all year long, too — including James' groin injury, which sidelined him for five weeks. Rajon Rondo missed a significant amount of time, and the team is currently without Lonzo Ball, who is recovering from an ankle sprain.

If the team is going to turn it around in its final 22 games and climb back into the Western Conference playoff race, having solid chemistry will be one of the most important factors.

Whether he likes it or not, that undoubtedly starts with James.

"It sucks that my injury happened and (Ball's) injury happened and so many of our injuries happened," James said, via Bleacher Report. "I'm so huge on, like, chemistry and camaraderie throughout the course of the season. ... The injuries have taken a toll on our team."



# NFL unlikely to change review rules



**NEW YORK**—The National Football League clearly knows what its fans want.

A better mechanism in place to fix egregiously wrong calls? No, no. What really bothers fans is players coming off the sideline for celebrations, right?

The NFL's priorities can be humorous. While the competition committee is reportedly unlikely to propose any changes to the replay review process, after the highly controversial

non-call in the Saints-Rams NFC championship game, it might propose a rule to limit players coming off the sideline for celebrations.

Sure.

Mark Maske of the Washington Post said the competition committee, which meets this week, will look into proposing a rule prohibiting players from joining on-field celebrations. This is "at the behest of some teams and coaches," Maske said.

It doesn't seem like any



AP  
In this Jan. 20, 2019, file photo, Los Angeles Rams' Nickell Robey-Coleman breaks up a pass intended for New Orleans Saints' Tommy Lee Lewis during the second half of the NFL football NFC championship game in New Orleans.

everyone was concerned about.

It has been reported the committee will discuss the replay rules, so maybe there will end up being a movement to change things during those talks. The competition committee meets in Indianapolis during the annual scouting combine.

If a proposal for a new rule is made, it is made to the owners at the annual league meeting in March.

If the committee meets and decides against any changes to the replay review system, the people in New Orleans probably won't be too pleased.

## FAMILIAR

From Page 28

over Hodges. The swimmer turned pro triathlete from Guam topped the 2017 edition of Tagaman after clocking in at 2:12:52 in the 1.5-kilometer swim, 40K bike, and 10K run. Iijima completed the race more than eight minutes ahead of Hodges (2:21:04), who made stops in Ironman World Championships in Hawaii and other triathlon events across the United States and Asia before returning for Tagaman this year.

Last year, Iijima made it two in a row when she finished the longer race (2K swim, 90K bike, and 21K run) in 4:34:30 and prevailed against Korea's Dan Bi Hong (4:51:10), A Reum Jo (4:53:39), Jijho Hwang (5:12:20), Chung Narae (5:21:40), and Jin Hyung Kim (5:22:50), and Nishiuchi (4:55:48).

This year, Tagaman's course features a 2K swim, 60K bike, and 15K run with the start/finish line at Minatchom At-dao pavilion in Susupe. In the swim leg, participants will go through the two-loop course in the waters off Kilili Beach, while for the bike part, triath-

letes will head south first up to the Airport Road (near the old Japanese bunker) before going north all the way to the Banzai Cliff and back to Minatchom At-dao. For the run leg, participants will run along Beach Road all the way down to the Gov. Eloy S. Inos Peace Park and back to the start/finish line.

Meanwhile, in the men's pro division, Japan's Yu Shinozaki will be back, as he aims to finish the race this time.

The Japanese pro collided with a car during the bike portion of the event last year, forcing him to quit the race won by Hong Kong's Yim Leong Law. The 2018 champion timed in at (4:23:20) to stun 2017 winner and favorite Alexander Dorovskikh (4:31:30) of Russia.

Others entered in the men's pro field (online registration) are Hiroki Nishiuchi, Fernando Jose Casares, Vasco Van De Flier, Soo Hwan Chun, and Jin Gu Ha.

As of yesterday, 111 individuals have signed up online for the 30th edition of the longest-running triathlon event in the Western Pacific, while the relay division has already drawn seven teams.

## SSC

From Page 28

"Calling all SSC alumni! We are spread worldwide, but let's unite for the 40th Saipan Ocean Swim. SSC is working on a commemorative event program and we would like to hear from all of you," SSC coach Jacoby Winkfield said.

Former SSC swimmers are requested to provide the following information or materials: name; year you swam for SSC; present location; favorite SSC memories; and pictures (now and then). Information must be sent to saipanswimclub@gmail.com with the alumni in the subject line and should be turned in by March 5.

"There is no way that we will be able to contact everyone, so please tag away and let's remember SSC well," Winkfield said.

The club usually holds the Saipan Ocean Swim after the SSC International Invitational Meet, which was scrapped this year due to the closure of the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool. SSC swimmers are still training despite the shutdown of the facility in preparations for a couple of off-island competitions this year. Winkfield's swimmers will be racing in the Inaugural Micronesian Swimming Championships in Palau, 2019 Pacific Games in Samoa, and 2019 World Swimming Championships in South Korea.

The Saipan Ocean Swim is a good warm-up for Tagaman Triathlon, as the former will take place a week before the triathlon event kicks off (March 30). Then for the post-Tagaman swim, SSC will be hosting the 16th Escape from Managaha on March 31.

fans really care about who is involved with celebrations after touchdowns or turnovers. People do care about the legitimacy of officiating, which took a big hit after that NFC title game.

The competition committee will talk about any potential changes in reviews. But Judy Battista of NFL Media reported one member of the committee told her he wasn't sure anything would be done to the

instant replay rules, and "definitely doesn't see enough support for reviewing non-calls."

But at least the NFL might eliminate players coming off the sideline after touchdowns to celebrate. That's what ev-

## Kraft visited parlor for sex on day of AFC game

**WEST PALM BEACH, Fla.** (AP) — New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft visited a Florida massage parlor for sex acts the night before and the morning of last month's AFC championship game, authorities said Monday in documents charging him with two misdemeanor counts of soliciting prostitution.

Kraft is one of hundreds of men charged in recent days as part of a crackdown on prostitution allegedly occurring in massage parlors between

Palm Beach and Orlando. Ten spas have been closed and several people, most of them women originally from China, have been charged with running the operation.

The 77-year-old Kraft was chauffeured to the Orchids of Asia Day Spa in a 2014 white Bentley on the evening of Jan. 19, where police say they videotaped him engaging in a sex act and then handing over an undetermined amount of cash, Jupiter, Florida, police said in charging documents

released by the Palm Beach State Attorney's Office.

Investigators said Kraft returned 17 hours later, arriving at the upper-middle class shopping center where the spa was located in a chauffeured 2015 blue Bentley, the documents said. Kraft, who is worth \$6 billion, was videotaped engaging in sex acts before paying with a \$100 bill and another bill, police said. He then flew to Kansas City to watch his Patriots defeat the Chiefs in overtime hours later.

Kraft, whose team won the Super Bowl earlier this month in Atlanta, denied wrongdoing Friday, shortly after Jupiter police announced he was being charged. The NFL said Monday in a statement that its personal conduct policy "applies equally to everyone in the NFL" and it will handle "this allegation in the same way we would handle any issue under the policy." Kraft's wife, Myra Hiatt Kraft, died in 2011. He has been dating 39-year-old actress Ricki Noel Lander since 2012.

## TENNIS

From Page 28

In 2012, tennis went home with two top athletes awards with Micronesian Games gold medalist Todd Montgomery getting the Male Athlete of the Year trophy and junior player Mikayla Lopez winning the Female Student Athlete of the Year plum.

Then in 2013, Carol Lee got one of her four Female Athlete of the Year. Her three other trophies were won in 2015, 2016, and 2017. For two consecutive years, tennis swept the award for student-athletes with Lee and Schorr winning in 2016 and the former doing in again with Jimin Woo in 2017.

"Every year, our players are motivated to do better and the recognitions they are getting are added boost to their morale," said Race, who himself won multiple awards in NMSA's annual banquet.

Race was the Coach of the Year in 2007, 2012, and 2017, making him one of the only three coaches (the two other were Race's fellow CNMI



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Jeff Race, left hands over the NMSA/Tan Siu Lin Foundation Male Student Athlete of the Year award to Robbie Schorr, center, while January Athlete of the Month Richard Steele looks on during the NMSA/TSL Foundation Annual Sports Banquet last week at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

Hall of Famer Tony Rogolifoi and Elias Rangamar) to have received the recognition more than once since NMSA started giving the award in 2004.

In the team division, Race's CNMI Junior National Squad

is the only group to have earned the Team of the Year honors twice, bagging the prestigious award in 2013 and 2017.

"Credits go to all our hard-working players. They go out there to play their best and

continue to train to improve their games. Our program also remains strong because of the support we are getting from the players' parents and other sponsors/supporters here in and off-island," Race said.





Dodgers meet  
with Harper, still  
no decision yet

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# Saipan Tribune Sports

Conley, Grizzlies  
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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

## A decade of dominance for tennis

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
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REPORTER

When Northern Marianas Sports Association president Michael White read the group's top athlete-awardees in the last decade during last week's 2018 NMSA/Tan Annual Sports Banquet at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan, tennis players were mentioned in the honor roll each year.

"We did pretty well in that span," said Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association official and many-time national



ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
Long-time CNMI national team coach Jeff Race returns to Robbie Schorr during their men's singles semis game in the 2019 White Coconut Tennis Classic held at the American Memorial Park courts this month.



team coach Jeff Race when asked about the sport's accomplishment.

"It says a lot about our program and we will strive to keep it that way—have a strong tennis program, especially for our youth," Race added.

Robbie Schorr made it a decade-long dominance for tennis when he took the 2018 NMSA/TSL Foundation Male Student Athlete of the Year award last week. In that 10-year stretch, the 16-year-old Schorr won three Male Student Athlete of the Year award trophy, getting his first in 2014 and the second in 2016.

Former CNMI No. 1 junior player Ji Hoon Heo started tennis' surge in the annual awards banquet when he claimed the Male Athlete of the Year award in 2009. The following year, Christian Miller was given the Male Student Athlete of the Year, while the same recognition went to Rafael Jones in 2011.

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## SSC to hold two ocean swim races



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Saipan Swim Club's Sophia Gauran, left, and Jinju Thompson race out of the water during the 2019 SSC Meek & Mighty Ocean Swim held at the Kanoa Resort early this month.

Saipan Swim Club will be hosting two open water swim races next month.

First up is the 2019 Saipan Ocean Swim on March 23 and it will take



place near the waters off Naked Fish in Susupe. Next month's Saipan Ocean Swim is the 40th edition of the race and since it's a special one,

SSC is working on a commemorative event program and would want the input of former swimmers of the club.

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## Familiar rivals in Tagaman Triathlon

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO  
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REPORTER

Guam's Manami Iijima and the Philippines Maria Hodges will meet again as they lead the women's pro field in the 30th Tagaman Triathlon.

Hodges and Iijima are the latest triathletes to sign up for the March 30 event, joining early birds Laura Nedeau of Guam and Hong Kong's Chau Yu Ng. Also on the list as of yesterday is the returning Maki Nishiuchi.



Iijima will be gunning for a 3-peat when she races in next month's Tagaman and eyeing a repeat

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hyatt Regency Saipan general manager Nick Nishikawa, second left, poses for a photo with other Hyatt staff and officials during a meeting with Triathlon Association in the CNMI, which is organizing this year's 30th Tagaman Triathlon.